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81 SEPTEMBER

WHITE DWARF

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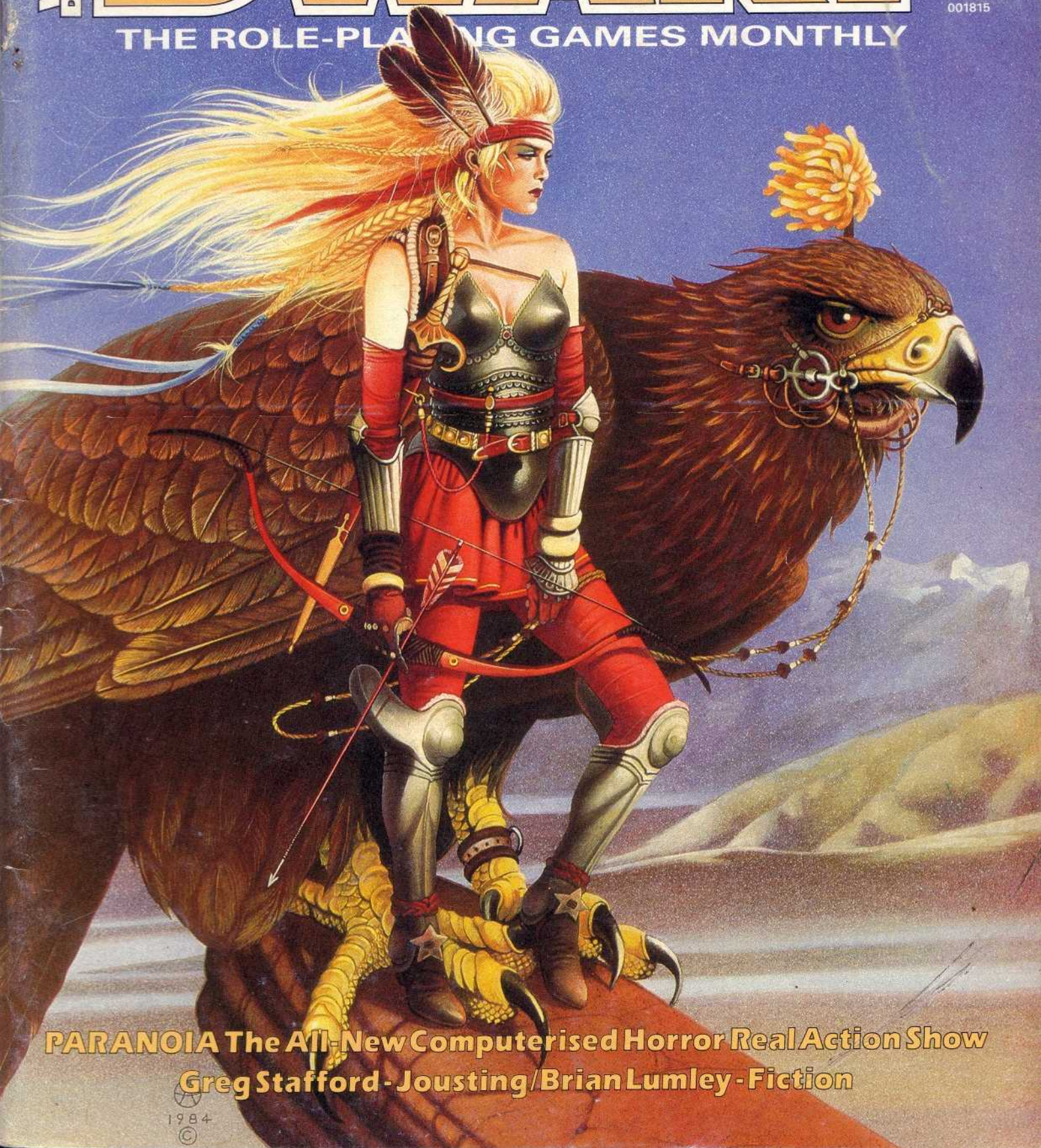
THE ROLE-PLAYING GAMES MONTHLY



PARANOIA The All-New Computerised Horror Real Action Show

Greg Stafford - Jousting / Brian Lumley - Fiction

1984 ©

WHITE DWARF

ISSUE 81 SEPTEMBER 1986

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Nice bunch of lads, eh? For those who survived their SAN check, those happy figures on the fire escape at the Studio the lads of the Publications Department (ie, the office next door), namely Jim Bambra, Graeme Davis and Phil Gallagher. See what happens if you eat your greens and work on *Warhammer*? The one person you can't see (he was thrown off the stairs and was last seen cratering the car park) is young Michael Brunton, who is bound to end up as the nineteenth editor this esteemed magazine has had in the last three weeks. "Wot, annnuver one?" you cry. Yes, well I'm taking a small holiday to count the Poll returns (4500 and still rising!) and to help put some additional typos in *Warhammer*.

So, what has Mikie inherited from the WD articles file? Well, next month, look out for a Dwarf that is even thicker than usual (surely not possible...) as we include a special preview pull-out of *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay*, and then check out the main body of the mag for a special loony feature or two based upon the follow-up to *The Colour of Magic*, Terry Pratchett's *Light Fantastic*. If you haven't read the book yet, go out and get it because it's a hoot, and you'll never understand what we're gibbering about otherwise. Just on the off-chance that some of you resist this blatant piece of commercialism, we'll give a few away as prizes.

Something else that has just struck us is that we're hurtling towards two anniversaries; 10 years of WD and WD100. I mention it now so that you can remind the next half-dozen editors in case we forget to leave a note.

Paul Cockburn

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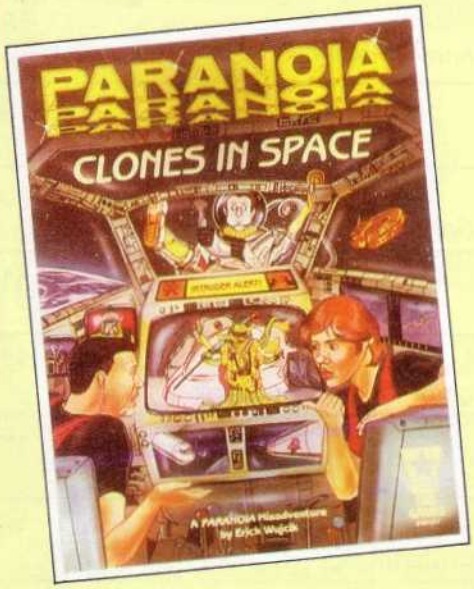


CLONES IN SPACE

Roleplaying Adventure — Paranoia

West End Games £5.95

This, the latest Paranoia adventure, gives all loyal servants of the Computer the chance to discover the delights of going outside of Alpha Complex and outside the Outside. The title is a bit of a giveaway... **Clones in Space** gives you the chance to explosively decompress Commie Mutant Traitors, fight off Flying Saucers and indulge in all manner of space-faring excitement. If you have read this far, please report for termination. Thank you.

The adventure itself is 48 pages long and is set in Alpha Complex and a very high room — or at least, the elevator takes a very long time to get there. Before the main adventure starts, there is a solo section that duplicates the group action, to give referees a feel for the wonderful environment of space.

The clones are requested (by the Computer, you understand) to track down a traitor and eliminate her. Unfortunately, what appears to be a simple mission is complicated by the fact that the traitor has stolen an 'experimental elevator' (ie, a space shuttle) and left Alpha complex. The clones are therefore left with little choice but to pursue her - unhampered as they are by any real knowledge of space and its non-safety elements (OK, hazards). There is also the small matter of with replacement clones: the Computer has decided to send them all into space. This means that clones are available for immediate use, with no awkward wait while the Computer sends the 'elevator' up. It also means that each player has up to five Infra-red food-vat attendants in tow. This, in turn, means problems as the Infra-reds tend to get under foot...

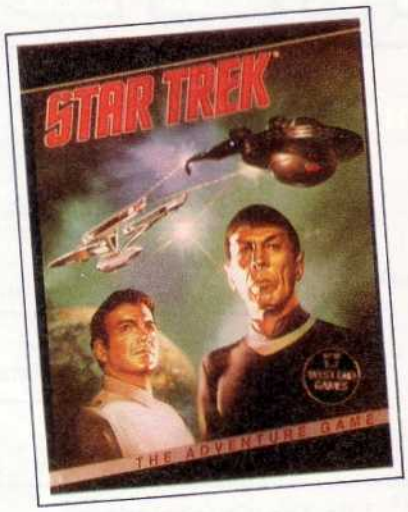
Once in space the fun really starts, as the clones discover that something really big is going on, and the adventure culminates in a huge and extremely silly space battle against ludicrously inept all-conquering aliens.

Alert Paranoia GMs may have spotted a slight weakness in the plot — all the characters' clones are put into one extremely fragile basket. Most Paranoia GMs will, however, resist the resulting temptation to kill them all off at one go, if only so that the adventure lasts long enough for the GM to use all its best jokes.

The authors also missed a good bet for the ending of the adventure. Think of the possibilities for further... interesting encounters if the aliens follow the clones back to Alpha Complex!

Despite these niggles, *Clones In Space* is a fun adventure, and well worth adding to your collection if you run a Paranoia campaign. Thank you for your cooperation.

Fiona Lloyd



THE ENTERPRISE[4] ENCOUNTER
STAR TREK: THE ADVENTURE GAME

Boardgames

West End Games £16.95 each

Spawned by the Star Trek phenomena, here are two suprisingly dissimilar games, especially so if you consider their physical similarities. Both are easy to learn and play, and both have the same sort of components: a 22″ x 17″ playing board, brief rules, die-cut counters (with accompanying plastic bags to store them in) and dice.

The Enterprise[4] Encounter is the more basic of the two, a game relying on luck more than skill, and has its roots in a Star Trek episode, *The Squire of Gothos*, which featured a being called Trelane — a powerful infant of his race, given to certain eccentricities. In the game, the good old Enterprise has been sent on a mission by the Federation, but it is way-laid when it encounters four identical Klingon cruisers, ap-

GRIFFIN ISLAND

Campaign Scenario — RuneQuest

Avalon Hill £16.95

parently destroyed by each other

Before we know where we are, the Enterprise gets duplicated by a playful Trelane, and the crew is scattered throughout a diabolical game of his making. The aim is for the players to gather lost crew members by battling other Enterprises for them or by picking them up from the midst of past TV episodes in which they are marooned, reliving the events more or less as they occurred — another set of repeats! — Battles are resolved using playing cards — you can't fire without a phaser or photon torpedo card, and you're hit if you can't play a shields card against a well-targeted shot. Other cards to play include tractor beams, warp cards (an extra move on the Battle Vortex) and tougher phaser cards

Adventures come on similar cards, and these are placed around the board as the game progresses. Once a player has picked up one crew member from each of the six starship specialities (Command, Science, Medicine, Communications, Navigation and Security or the Starfleet 'wildcard'), he wins, though everyone else gets a 'last-ditch' attempt to stop him.

The game works best with three or four players, and takes less than an hour to play. It grows on you, and it's the sort of game to play when you can't be bothered to set up anything more complex.

Star Trek: The Adventure Game is for two players. One controls the Federation, the other the Klingon Empire. It is an unusual mixture of boardgame and solo adventure, with the emphasis on diplomacy and politics — no rules for ship-to-ship combat are included, for example.

The middle of the board is dotted with unexplored star systems in the Organian sector, a sort of neutral zone between the two rival powers. These are 'discovered' in play using 40 colourful planet counters. When a ship enters an unexplored star system, the controlling player selects a planet counter at random. The opposing player reads its nature from the paragraph book, and then the exploring side gets to meet the inhabitants. With the aid of the dice and 800 jumbled paragraphs (the solo adventure aspect), the player finds out if he has managed to enlist the inhabitants to his side.

Gaining or losing a planet affects Reputation and Political Standing, which are used to determine who goes first in a turn and, eventually, who wins.

Random events are also possible, and the action hots up when Federation Commissioners arrive to help negotiations. They are so convinced of their superiority that the Klingon player gets to decide the outcome of any of their exploration attempts. The Klingons get agents, who try their best to sabotage ships or to infiltrate Federation politics. However, agents are fanatically loyal to the Klingon Emperor, and they will kill any officers that they consider to be disloyal — which turns out to be most of them in practice. Agents are usually carried around on starships without any officers, just in case.

Star Trek: The Adventure Game can be played again and again. There are — even solitaire rules if you need them. This isn't a pushover to play, and I'd rank it with *Valley of the Four Winds, Cosmic Encounter* and all those other lovable classics.

Phil Frances

Way back in 1981, The Chaosium, Inc released a campaign pack for *RuneQuest* called *Griffin Mountain*, and what a wondrous item it was. At the time its depth, range and ease of use were more than enough to encourage people to bandy around terms like 'state of the art'. Of course, strange things happened to RuneQuest, and now it is a very different game to what it was back then. To tie in with RQIII, therefore, the original authors have revised the pack to give us **Griffin Island**.

For those of you who are completely unfamiliar with the original, let me tell you what to expect. The boxed set comes as a GM's book, detailing the entire island; a Scenarios book, full of... scenarios; a sheaf of player handouts; and a large map of the place, also for players. It is this map which is the lead-in to the campaign; apparently once the property of one Aigonius Windsword, explorer by trade, it makes obscure reference to a number of treasures to be found, as well as providing useful information on important areas. However, *Griffin Island* is a rather wild place, and the locals aren't going to take lightly to a bunch of freeloaders sneaking in and plundering their heritage, especially when they're all rather busy conspiring against each other! If the adventurers aren't too careful they could find themselves on the wrong side of everyone as they trek from one walled citadel to the next in search of further clues to the whereabouts of riches. This makes for a long-running and very exciting campaign which even now, five years on, seems as fresh as ever.

Griffin Island is labelled a 'Gateway' product, which means that it is set neither in pseudo-Europe nor in Glorantha, but in some strange half-way house where orcs and lizard men (introduced here as 'slarges') are the dominant monsters and all the gods are exactly the same as before but have different names. I found this rather distracting, for it would have been just as easy to make everything fit in with Glorantha as to change it. However, it does make the pack easy to use in other roleplaying games, something which could not really have been said for *Griffin Mountain*, for example.

I have a few other minor quibbles. The player handouts are set up such that they reveal all the information the adventurers are able to find out somewhere at one go — without requiring so much as a conversation. I prefer to make my players work for their information, rather than say 'OK, you've been here three weeks, this is what you've learnt'! I would also have preferred the players' map to have looked more like an ancient map, rather than have typeset text alongside Windsword's scrawl.

Those who already have *Griffin Mountain* needn't feel that they must have this pack. It introduces a few new locations and characters, including a new rival for Blueface, Granny Keeneye, but on the whole it is much the same as it was, with only the names changed in most cases. Despite these very petty quibbles and the usual extortionate (and unforgiveable) Avalon Hill price tag, *Griffin Island* is very highly recommended to everyone who hasn't a copy of the original.

Robert Neville

GHOST TOASTIES

Roleplaying Adventure and GM's Screen Ghostbusters
West End Games £6.95

This first Ghostbusters adventure is a package of a 24 page adventure (including four pages of West End's usual strange player handouts) and a colourful, three panel GM's screen. The adventure itself is heavily laden with awful puns, dreadful jokes, and a deep-seated distrust of cartoon advertising animals.

The plot of **Ghost Toasties** concerns the return of Hagost, (an all-powerful South American agricultural deity now linked to junk food), and his attempts to recapture a long-lost crystal containing his life force. Said crystal is now hidden in a packet of breakfast cereal somewhere in America. As Hagost gains power thousands of Americans are possessed and start to head for darkest Peru... Enter the heroic Ghostbusters, who have to penetrate Hagost's pocket universe and deal with the various odd manifestations that they find there — many of which bear strong resemblances to cartoon advertising animals.

Ultimately the PCs will encounter Hagost himself, who can be found under an enormous mound of beakfast cereal. It's that sort of adventure. There is also a certain suspicious resemblance between Hagost and a certain advertising tiger.

The screen is a fairly normal three-fold card. The players' side repeats information on character design and the fairly vague hints on ghostly powers from the original game. The GM's side includes the commonly used sections of the rules, but given the simplicity of the rules system the screen's major function is hiding the GM's maps and notes from inquisitive players. Overall,the screen is nice, if not essential. Played for giggles, this is a good package.

Fiona Lloyd

OPEN BOX

LORIEN & The Halls Of The Elven Smiths

Roleplaying Supplement — MERP/Rolemaster

Iron Crown Enterprises £4.95

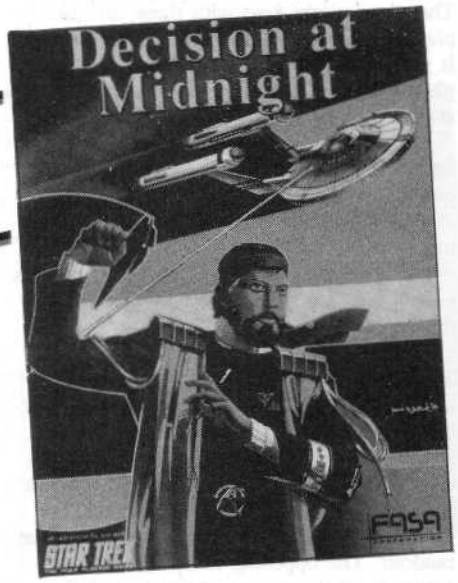
Yet another great Middle-earth campaign supplement clunks out of the scriptorium of ICE in Virginia. It's 62 pages long with a glittering silver cover and an 8-page central colour insert giving layouts of places in Lorien, the city of Ost-in-Edhil and maps east and west of the Misty Mountains. The text is densely packed and supported by fine Liz Danforth artwork and (as usual) some of the best plans and maps you're likely to come across in any rolegame.

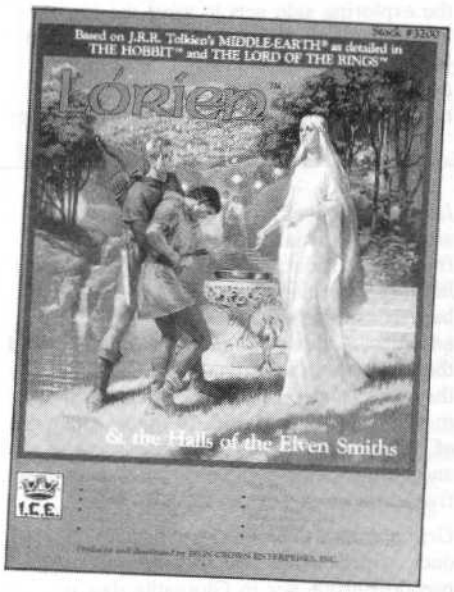
Despite the module's title, by far the largest portion of this supplement is given over to the Second Age establishment of the Noldorian Elf, Celebrimbor. His city in Eregion where the Elven smiths created the Rings of Power, is detailed with splendid imagination, which doesn't leave much room for a somewhat (in comparsion) cursory glance at the Golden Wood.

The campaign supplement is constructed in much the same way as the recent examples from ICE. After a general guidelines section and introduction, the areas covered are briefly described. These encompass the lands known as Hollen and Lorien in the Third Age.

Following this there is a 'cultural' section discussing the different branches of the Eldar race and their origins, and giving preliminary details of the working of the Elven jewelsmiths. This section is rather like that given in the Moria supplement, although dealing with a new set of artisans and working practises. More information, including a useful summary of special metals and magical substances is given later in the supplement. These guidelines will be of much use to GMs wishing to devise their own special and magical items.

Several characters of note are detailed for both areas: in Ost-in-Edil there are Cerlebrimbor, Annatar (the disguised Sauron) and others; in Lorien dwell Galadriel and Celeborn. The organistaion of societies is also described, and ICE have used a substantial, but credible, poetic license. The depth of these supplements continues to amaze and delight this reader for one, and





cannot help but inspire wonderful adventures.

Stretching the imagination even further are the layouts and designs for Elven dwellings in the two realms. The concept of the city in Ost-in-Edil, 'a huge ship overlooking a long, westward-reaching lake' seems fine, but the angularity and 'modern' appearance is somewhat off-putting. However, one realises that the other-worldliness of it becomes the intellectual High Elves.

The building designs are quite breathtaking in the final analysis. The expression of character and culture throughout the supplement, be it in terms of NPCs, descriptions of professions, dwellings and workplaces or interior furniture means that the whole world seems so much more real and alive to the senses. The game as it is presented here has a very good chance of achieving Tolkein's own criterion for fantasy, that of 'suspension of disbelief'.

Lorien is one of the finest roleplaying supplements I've seen, and is surely a must for all MERP players. Highly recommended to all lovers of fine roleplaying.

Graham Staplehurst

DECISION AT MIDNIGHT

A DOOMSDAY LIKE ANY OTHER

Roleplaying Adventure - STAR TREK RPG

FASA £4.95 each

These are the first two Star Trek scenarios I've had a real chance to look at, and frankly, I'm impressed by them. Standards of design and presentation are wonderful, and both pose real challenges to a group's roleplaying abilities. They are both pleasureable to read, and the plots are presented clearly and concisely.

Decision at Midnight is the shorter of the two, at only 48 sides. Without wishing to give too much away, the characters are assigned to the *USS Arkadelphia*, a Loknar-class frigate, under the command of Captain Ian Vellacora. The Arkadelphia is soon sent to monitor the borders of a newly-founded Asparax Confederation, a group of planets between the Organian Neutral Zone and the Triangle. The Confederation is making heavy hints that it would welcome Klingon allies and their technological assistance. Vellacora is no lover of Klingons, and before long the situation has been pushed to the brink of disaster. War between the Klingons and the Federation is in the air. Can the players avert this horror?

The scenario includes some impressive features: deck plans of the Arkadelphia, dozens of NPCs, and a comprehensive section of notes designed to aid the gamemaster when running the scenario.

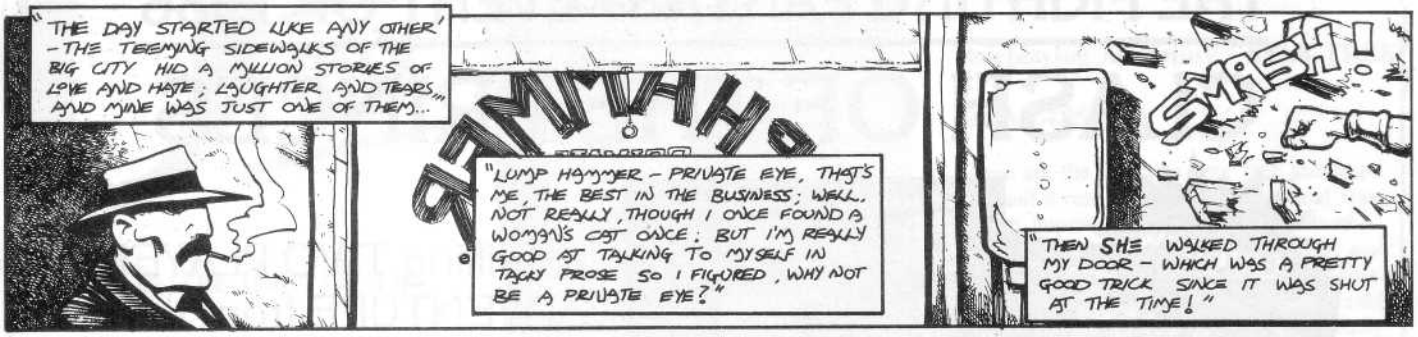
A Doomsday Like Any Other runs to 64 sides, and concerns the sudden livening-up of a routine patrol. The *USS Fife* is surveying the frontier region between the Gorn and Romulan territories, with an eye out for Gorn and Romulan ships that may be in the area. The routine is broken when a distress call is received from a merchant vessel, the *Pride O'Rigel*, which has picked up an unwanted "companion" on its travels. Its roguish captain is also carrying a surprising cargo. Needless to say, an old Star Trek TV episode is the culprit for the basis of the plot, and buffs will doubtless be able to work it out from even the scant information that I have given.

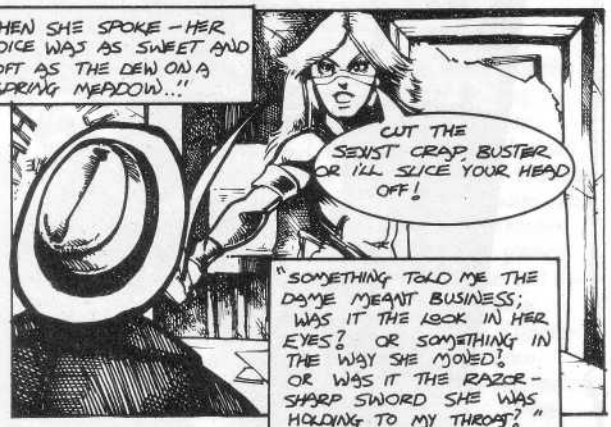
Again, *Doomsday* gives more than just the scenario — more extensive gamemastering notes, lots of NPCs, and statistics for six vessels for use with the *FASA Ship Combat System*.

The only thing that irked me is that both scenarios provide ready-to-play situations with no alternate campaign entry points. *Decision at Midnight* provides suggestions for follow-ups from its end, but neither says anything about using the scenarios in an already on-going campaign — alternative settings would be welcome for this reason.

Phil Frances

THRUD THE BARBARIAN





HOW MIGHTY, THE PEN?

A look at the world of play-by-mail, by Jonny Jacobsen

For many gamers, nothing comes close to the thrill of face-to-face roleplay experience. Fortunes are won and lost, reputations made and ruined, heroes come and go. All this, across the coffee-stained tables of your favourite GM.

Happy is the gamer who can claim to have a fixed circle of fellow players as friends. Play in the same group for any length of time, and you come to know each player's idiosyncracies. Most importantly, perhaps, you familiarise yourself with the style and standards of a regular GM. Once you know where your GM draws the lines, you can be fairly confident that each successive run will take you deeper into a familiar, gaming universe.

To players in such an enviable position, the idea of gaming postally might seem ridiculous in the extreme. Why bother with postal gaming when you can get the real thing for free? Postal is often seen as second best; an option only for those with no adequate face-to-face alternative, stuck in some Philistine wilderness of *Monopoly* players and *Trivial Pursuit* fanatics. But such is not the case.

There are thousands of postal gamers in Britain today who see their hobby not as a second choice, but as a valid form of roleplay in its own right, with its own, special rewards. It is in this spirit that I want to look at some of the features peculiar to postal gaming, and to offer advice to the prospective participant.

Join the Crowds

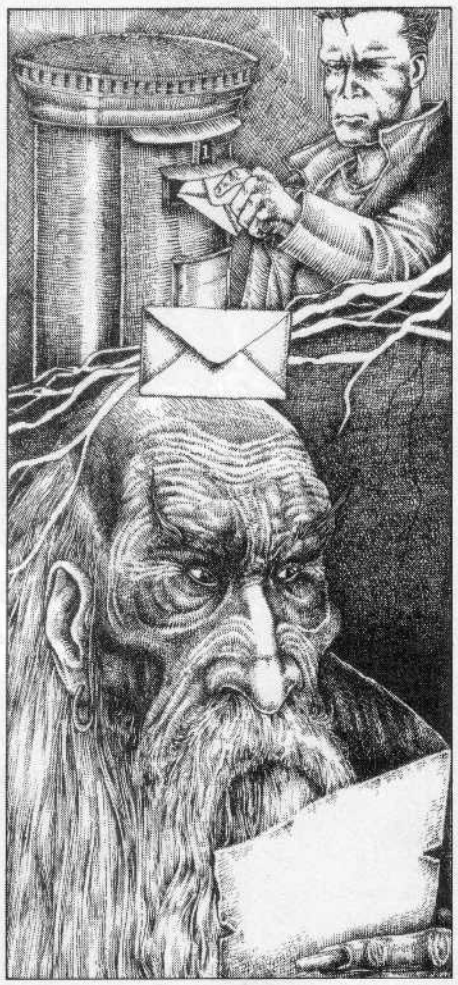
Now there's postal gaming, and there's postal gaming. You can have space-age or medieval adventure, wargame or diplomacy, or any number of combinations and permutations therein. There are games with a set number of turns and given objectives, and free-form games that run as long as there are enough players interested. But I'm going to stick to what I know. I shall be talking about play in a postal FRP campaign. The kind that runs indefinitely and which, though computers may be used to help with some things, is run by your traditional carbon-based life form (crude, but effective).

In commercially-run postal campaigns, we can be talking about several hundred players or more in a crowded universe. Not many private campaigns can claim to run quite so many player characters. In such a busy world, filled with blood-hungry barbarians and trigger-happy mages, there is unlikely to be any shortage of things to do.

Practical restrictions in face-to-face gaming often oblige players to stick with fairly compatible characters. But there is no such limit to who you want to be or what you want to do in a postal campaign. You are in a one-to-one correspondence with your GM, who you are paying to deliver what you want from a fantasy campaign. Exploit this to the full - be all you can be! A word of caution however; while it makes commercial sense for the professional GM to please the customer, if you insist on making persistent, unreasonable demands, ("What do you mean, I can't kill him? He's only got ten guards!"), there's nothing to stop them refunding your money and dropping you from their mailing lists. After all, they have the interests of *all* their players to consider.

Join the Clubs

You're never alone in a postal campaign. One of the most enjoyable aspects of postal gaming is communications between players. Messages between characters can be enclosed with the GM's regular correspondence, or sent direct from one player to another to save time (or perhaps to avoid revealing players' plans to the GM). You can exchange information and maps, arrange meetings and organise joint expeditions. Players form organisations based around campaign gods, or a particular 'profession' - a thieves guild, for example. These serve as useful contact and resource centres, particularly for players new to a campaign (some players involved in more than one campaign, have set up the same organisation in several gaming universes. You will find the Viking Alliance, for instance, in at least three major postal campaigns - all founded by the same Scandinavian gamer!).



A newsletter is often produced by the GMs, complete with campaign information, player messages, questions and general abuse. Nor is it unknown for player organisations to produce their own publications. These can be as well produced and informative as the original 'house' newsletter, although perhaps only available to members of a particular organisation. With such a variety of methods for player communication and interaction, neither the players nor the GMs can be sure that they know all the secrets. This being the case, fresh roleplay possibilities are ripe for development.

Go it Alone

If you don't fancy gaming with a group of players who you might never meet in the flesh, you can always go it alone. Postal gaming offers scope for solo play which face-to-face campaigns are less likely to be able to accommodate. Even if you decide to avoid your fellow players, your character need not operate alone. You can still ally yourself with a powerful NPC, or work on equal terms with adventurers run by the GM. If the scenarios filling the pages of the news-letter do not interest you, pursue your own objectives. You might want to carve yourself a lone niche in some desolate wilderness area. In time, you could come to play the inscrutable hermit to passing travellers, who might - or might not - help. Or if you prefer to make trouble instead of searching it out, you could set yourself up as a bandit. But then of course, you might attract the unwelcome attentions of your fellow players. In either case, if the GM is willing to cooperate, no one need ever know that you are, in fact, a player.

Go Your Own Way

For better or worse, most players want their name and deeds to become known. Few players go their own sweet way, careless of what others are doing around them. This is surely a good thing. Postal roleplay comes into its own when large numbers of characters are involved in a single scenario, possibly without even being fully aware of the extent of player involvement.

Even if you do choose to involve yourself in the schemes of other players, you still don't have to follow mainstream gaming patterns. If, for example, you want to see how well a character can get out by purely non-violent means, then there's nothing to stop you trying it. In postal campaigns, this is a perfectly practicable option. So whether you want to do the usual things, or experiment with possibilities not normally viable in face-to-face gaming, it's your choice. You call the tunes and, if they want to keep your custom, the GMs should dance accordingly.

Secrets and Strategies

In face-to-face gaming, a common problem for a player wishing to try something without the knowledge of the other players, is to arrange it so that only the GM gets to know. When a note passes across the table, you can almost see the various characters tightening their purse-strings, edging back to the wall and sniffing at their food for traces of poison (regardless of the fact that the suspicions aroused in the real world have been illegitimately translated into the gaming world; but let that pass).

With postal gaming, the problem is curiously inverted. Players are hard put to discover if they are being betrayed until the blow is well nigh struck. In a postal campaign, you can never be sure that there are not messages going through the post that will seal your fate by another's hand. In this respect, the postal campaign acquires something of the tension of a *Diplomacy* game. It becomes that much more important to think ahead. Try to give your GM advice to cover every likely contingency - and a few more besides - in order to improve your chances of surviving.

Generally speaking, the more you put into your turnsheets, the more chance you have of achieving your objectives. Let me apply this point to combat.

From the player's point of view at least, the rules in postal FRP tend to be fairly simple. This avoids complicating the progress of the game any more than is necessary. Nevertheless, the complexity of rule systems such as *Chivalry & Sorcery* can be recreated in a postal campaign by the creativity of the player and GM. Combat resolution may seem a simple matter of the GM rolling one set of stats against another, but there's nothing to stop you trying to tip the scales in your favour. Give the GM copious details of any special tricks that you'd like to be considered on the relevant occasions. For example:

> "My first blow will always be an attempt to end the fight before it gets started by going for a critical on my opponent's arm. If that fails, try to move myself into a position where my opponent has the sun in his eyes...."

.... and so on. Though character stats may be the major determining factor in any combat, imaginative and detailed instructions could swing the battle your way. Check with your GM to see if such things are taken into account.

Sincerely Yours

Your fellow gamers don't have to remain faceless shadows. You might want to organise regular meetings for the players in a campaign, if the GMs do not already do so. There, you can get to know the people behind the characters with whom you've been making history. Plans can be discussed, alliances made or broken, as your socialising becomes an extension of the gaming environment. Of course if, say, you live in Edinburgh, while the meetings take place in London, then time and money may well rule out the possibility your attendance. But you can always try contacting players living in your own area, or better still, get your own friends involved in the campaign. Entering a campaign *en masse* can have distinct advantages. If you all cooperated, you would enjoy the safety of your numbers, and as a group, you could quickly become a force to be reckoned with.

Always remember that you are in a professionally run campaign. Since the GMs are running things on a commercial basis, they are likely to be easy on you when you make your first mistakes. They're hardly going to cut their own throats by coming down heavy on you at the first opportunity. Killing you off as soon as you put a foot wrong is bad for business. Without necessarily letting you get away with suicidal heroics then, they are not about to forget that you're a paying customer. If you do lose a character, some campaigns operate a karma system, so that long-standing players do not have to start right back at the bottom of the heap.

It is surely clear by now that postal FRP is a totally different experience to face-to-face gaming. Assertive players who prosper in the face-to-face set-up, might find that they have difficulties in a postal campaign. On the other hand, quiet players may find the postal format more to their taste. Postal gaming is an extension of and a complement to face-to-face roleplay. Each alternative has its own merits and drawbacks, but be sure and try both before judging between them.

AT THE CROSSROADS

SOLO JOUSTING FOR PENDRAGON

by Greg Stafford

Arthurian stories are full of encounters with knights who are waiting at a road crossing, ford, or bridge to joust with any and all comers. This duty is often self-imposed to gain the knight some glory. Sometimes it is imposed by a lady.

This set of tables is designed to make such duty easy for the players and characters to perform. Such activities might be done completely solo by a player during a year in which the character did not actively participate in the active campaign. Alternatively, a gamemaster can use these to determine which knights might be at a crossroads encountered during play.

Parts of the Pendragon game are necessary to use this system.

STEP 1 Determine the type of road. The types of road will determine the amount of traffic, and hence the number of opponents. If one or both of the roads is a Roman Road, then use the Roman Road Encounter column. If both are paths, use the Path column. All others use the Road Encounter Column.

STEP 2 Determine the number of encounters. Roll 1d20 each month to see how many opponents pass by.

CROSSROADS ENCOUNTER TABLE
(number of opponents)

D20	Roman Road	Road	Paths
1	3	2	1
2	4	2	1
3	5	3	1
4	5	4	1
5	8	4	2
6	10	4	2
7	10	5	2
8	10	5	2
9	10	5	3
10	12	6	3
11	12	6	3
12	14	6	4
13	14	7	4
14	15	7	4
15	15	7	5
16	16	8	5
17	17	8	5
18	18	9	6
19	19	10	6
20	20	10	7

STEP 3 Determine quality of knights. For each knight, roll 1D6 on this table.

D6	Result
1-2	Average
3-4	Good
5	Excellent
6	Special, roll again.

SPECIAL OPPONENT TABLE

D6	Result
1	Enemy Knight, roll again for quality
2-3	Bandits (1d6+1)
4	Saxon war party (1d6+1)
5	Pict War party (1D6+2)
6	Famous Knight, roll again.

FAMOUS KNIGHT TABLE

These are the star Knights for each period. Most of their stats can be found in *The Characters* book, and for those that can not the player must substitute.

Roll 1d6 to find the foe, dependant on the phase.

D6	Phase Two
1	Balin le Savage
2	Gawaine of Orkney
3	Griflet le fise de Dieu
4	Marhaus of Ireland
5	Tor le Pellinore of the Isles
6	Tor le Fise Aries
	Phase Three
1	La Cote Male Taile
2	Galeholt the Haut Prince
3	Lamorak de Galis
4	Lancelot du Lac (younger)
5	Palomides the Saracen
6	Ywaine le Chevalier au Lion
	Phase Four
1	Bors de Ganis
2	Gareth Beaumains
3	Lancelot du Lac (older)
4	Mordred of Orkney
5	Percivale de Galis
6	Tristram de Lyonesse
	Phase Five
1	Bors de Ganis
2	Gareth Beumains
3	Lancelot du Lac
4	Mordred of Orkney
5	Tristram of Lyonesse
6	Urre of Hungary

Bandits
Bandits will attack to capture the knight for ransom. If captured, they can be sold into serfdom (1L each). Use the stats from the back of *The Character book*.

Saxon Raiders
These foes will try to kill the knight. If captured, they can be sold into serfdom (1L each). Use the stats from the back of *The Character book*.

Pict War Party
These foes will try to kill the knight. If captured, they can be sold into serfdom (1L each). Use the stats from the back of *The Character book*.

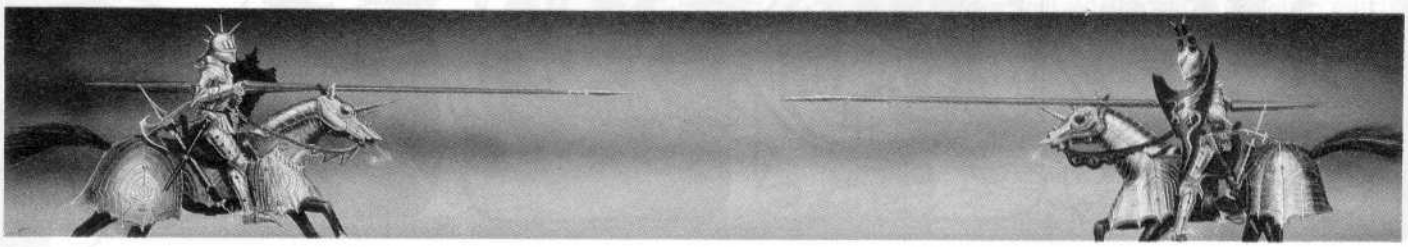
Enemy Knight
This knight is, or will become, a personal foe of the jouster. He fights to capture for ransom. If your player character has no permanent foes then make up a name, or ask the gamemaster for one.

STEP 4 ***FIGHT.*** The solitaire player must make the Joust rolls for both his character and the opponent. Remember to keep track of wins and losses, and of Glory gained each time.

Each opponent is fought separately and successively. If the player character is wounded, captured, or loses all his horses then the rest of the month will be affected.

When healing, each week subtract five from the results of the D20 roll result. For instance, a character on a Roman Road rolls 13, thus expecting to fight 14 enemies that month. But if the first one wounds him to require 2 weeks healing the player must subtract 10 from his die roll, making it a roll of 3. After recovery he would then have onnly 4 more opponents to fight. Remember that although the number given would be 5, he had already fought one.

Victorious jousters who release their opponents only for ransom will collect the money in 2D6 months. Characters may keep their defeated opponents' horse, armour, and weapons if they wish, but will get a Selfish check. Returning them will get a Generous Check.



Jousting in Dungeons & Dragons

by Stephen Gardner

In medieval times, leisure took took totally different forms from those that it does today. For the peasants, there were storytelling, dancing and cockfights; for the rulers, the rich and the propertied, there were nobler pursuits, such as falconry, poetry and jousting.

Jousting or tilting was an art. It is frequently mentioned in Arthurian legend, where there are frequent mentions of colourful tournaments and almost every water crossing is guarded by a knight who challenges all comers. Jousting took skill, strength and dexterity; a knight had to know all about his armour, his horse and his lance. He had to be able to ride fluently and he had to know the best place to hit his opponent. Like professional sports today, jousting took talent, training and constant practice.

Armour for the joust was made sensibly and economically, with convex surfaces to deflect blows, but there were still cracks and crevices on armour that could catch and hold a lance point. The best place was the crest of the helm, a decorated metal ornament atop the helmet which was sure to hold a lance point, but not all knights wore them. Other places to hit were under the rim of the collar or the shoulder-piece. Such a blow was almost certain to lift a knight off his horse. Formal jousts were always fought in platemail — death or injury was a certainty otherwise.

The lance or spear was held in the right hand, its butt supported in the crook of the right elbow. It had to be strong, but length was also important: 12-14 feet was common. Greater than this meant that you could hit before your opponent, but the lance was unwieldy. If the lance was short, the situation was reversed.

The last factor was the horse. The jouster rode a cumbersome beast, strong enough to bear his weight, but still fearsome in a charge. He had to sit loosely in the saddle then, in the moment of impact, grip with his knees and throw his weight forward. Jousters rode at a full gallop and had to think about hitting rather than being hit. They positioned themselves to maximise the effect of their own blow rather than mini— mise the damage of their opponent's blow.

In a joust, the knights charged each other shield to shield. They wore their shields on the left arm and passed on the left side. They had to direct their lances across the body, and therefore had to hit a quite small area: ie, the right side of the body or the helmet. Hits on the shield would often be deflected more often than not.

Considering these factors, the following are some rules suggestions for jousting in Dungeons & Dragons. The jousters' normal *to hit* score with lance is modified by his dexterity and the length of lance he chooses (normal modifications for high or low strength still apply):

Dexterity Adjustment

Below 9	-1
10-14	no adjustment
15-16	+1
17-18	+2

Lance

Type	Length	Adjustment
i	Up to 9 feet	+2
ii	10-11 feet	+1
iii	12-14 feet	no adjustment
iv	15-16 feet	-1
v	17-18 feet	-2

The two jousters hurtle together. The one with the longest lance strikes first. If he rolls a number between bewteen his modified *to hit* score and his *to hit* score plus **4** (inclusive) he has hit his opponent, but not in a critical spot which will hold his lance point. He still has a chance of dislodging his opponent, however. A roll of five or more above the *to hit* roll means that the lance has lodged in the target's armour. When hit, a jouster can make an ability check on a D20, using the average of his STR and DEX (rounded up). This check is modified depending on the STR of the attacker. Compare the STR of the attacker with the average of the of the STR and DEX of his opponent. For each point advantage the former has over the latter, the defender suffers a penalty of +1 to the die roll on the ability check, and vice versa. For instance, knight A has an STR of 14, and hits knight B whose average STR/DEX is 12; knight A has a two point advantage, so knight B's ability check is made at +2, meaning that he must roll (in effect) a 10 or less. A knight who is knocked from his horse in this manner does not take normal damage from the lance. In the event of a "critical" hit (a roll of five better than required), the defending knight suffers a much larger penalty. The attacking knight's level is added to 5 and the result is the penalty to the die roll on the ability check — and this is in addition to any of the penalties above. A "critical" hit of this type also inflicts normal damage with the lance. If the knight actually manages to stay on his horse, his opponents lance is shattered by the impact. For example, a knight with an average STR/DEX of 13 is critically hit by a 4th level opponent (STR 14); the die roll is modified by 5+4+1=+10, ing a roll of 3 or less is required remain mounted!

Example: Consider a tilt between Sir Gaheris of Orkney and King Ban of Benwick. Gaheris is a 3rd level fighter with a 10 foot lance (+1 to hit), a DEX of 15 and a STR of 14. Ban is 5th level, DEX 13,STR 15 and uses a 13 foot lance. Both knights need to roll a 12 to hit AC2.

They thunder together, Ban striking first. He manages to hit with a 13 - not a critical hit - but Gaheris must still make an ability check using the average STR/DEX (15). Ban's STR is also 15, so there are no modifiers. Gaheris rolls a 13 and manages to stay on his horse. Then he strikes, rolling an 8: his lance wavers above Ban's crest...

They turn for a second charge, and this time Ban rolls a 19! Gaheris has a very slight chance of remaining in the saddle (the die roll is modified by 5+5=10), but as he rolls an 11 he goes flying.

The Fall

An unseated knight literally goes flying. In Arthurian legend, a joust between Sir Launcelot and Sir Turquine sends both knights somersaulting through the air, both lances shatter and both horses sustain broken backs. Under all that armour, the least a knight can expect are bruises. Of course, if the contestants are jousting under exotic circumstances, such as on flying griffons, they will also take damage through falling to the ground.

A knight who takes a fall takes the normal damage from a lance if he was subject to a critical hit. Additionally, he should make a CON ability check to avoid more serious injury. If he fails, roll on the **Injury Table**.

Injury Table (roll 1D10)

1-2	Concussion, possible temporary loss of sight etc. Grogginess, disorientation. The knight must go to bed for the rest of day.
3-4	Unconsciousness, lasts up 1D4-1 hours
5	Serious unconsciousness for 3 hours to 5 days (GM's discretion)
6-7	Fractured bones (DEX and STR minus 1-6 until healed), roll on sub-table below
8-9	Dislocated joints (DEX minus 1-4 until healed)
10	Broken bones (DEX, STR minus 1-6, CON minus 1-4 until healed), roll on sub-table below

Bone Injuries Sub-table (roll 1D12)

1-2	Minor, eg. wrist, ankle
3-4	Leg(s)
5	Pelvis
6	Spine★
7-8	1-6 ribs
9	Skull
10-11	Arm(s)
12	Neck★

★ *Possible death if broken; CON ability check to survive such an injury.*

Obviously, it is difficult to define the exact effects of a fall as jarring as one at jousting. The above tables are intended as a loose guide only.

The winner of a joust should be allowed to keep his opponent's horse and armour unless the contest was a "friendly" match. It ought to be possible for characters to make a good living travelling from one tournament to another, living on their winnings.

Jousting Terms

bur	broad ring on lance to protect hand.
couch	lower lance for attack
fewter	rest for lance; fix lance in rest
jesseraunte	coat of armour
puisuivant	herald, announcer
surcingle	girth for horse

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"Today Gaming, Tomorrow The World"

Letters Page,
White Dwarf,
Enfield Chambers,
16/18 Low Pavement,
Nottingham NG1 7DL

You know, there are some people who think we make up all the letters on this page. But believe it or not, there really are people in this world who write in just to tell us things like this...

N. C. Farrall, Ashby, S. Humberside: I picked up the last four issues of the *Dwarf* from a friend, and what do I find? Revelations! You lot make The Bible an also-ran in that department. Forgive my fawning tones, but the new personnel at WD are a GOOD THING and the admission that WD is a house mag is out in the open at last - great! I bloom with superlatives at the *interesting* letters page, and I *love* the new lay out. The recent article on Psi-Judges for JDrp was fabbo too, the Traveller life-boat superb, and generally White Dwarf is now what it should be - an excellent mag!

Glad you noticed! However, we aren't always perfect.

Christopher Tomlin, Selly Oak, Birmingham: There is a glaring error in July's CoC scenario *Ghost Jackal Kill (WD 79)*: Isadora Turner driving from San Francisco to Los Angeles *and back again* and then "spending the rest of the night in her hotel". No mean feat, as it took me ten hours to drive the 458 miles from LA to San Francisco. The trip is at least a day each way, making it much harder for the investigators to follow Miss Turner or find out where she's been. I suggest Mr Davis uses an atlas in future.

Upon receiving Chris' letter we hit Graeme with a desk and demanded an immediate explanation, but all he could come up with was the following:

What can I say? Guilty as charged, m'lud! I don't suppose feeble excuses about souped-up Model Ts will do me any good here, so probably the best thing would be to re-set the Brabin House in San Francisco. Alternatively, Miss Collins could retire to the YWCA in Los Angeles after her abortive visit, although this would make shadowing her a much more difficult job.

Thanks Graeme. Oh, by the way, you're fired.

Kevin Jacklin, Emsworth, Hants: I am writing in response to Mr Peter Tamlyn's thought-provoking article *Roleplaying For Everyone* in *WD80*. He notes that the media have, in the past, only been interested in the Roleplaying Hobby because of its associations with occultism or the craziness of the players. Hence, before new players are to be attracted to the hobby, newspapers *et al* will have to take it a little more seriously.

Also, if more people are to be attracted to the hobby, the hobby media in the UK should make a start by taking a leaf out of the American hobby media's book and treat it as a 'grown up' pastime. All the UK magazines are displayed next to the childrens' comics in large newsagents, and the cover (and to some extent, the interior) resembles a comic. No wonder potential newcomers are put off! To give a for-instance, the reviews section in US magazines like *Different Worlds* devote a large amount of space to reviews. They do not have to do this, they could fill it with more advertisements. But to do so indicates that they think it is worth their while explaining about a game in some detail - gamers appreciate this (it saves time in a games store), and newcomers will learn more easily about the hobby (no more 'preaching to the converted'). By providing a wide-ranging selection of reviews, the US magazines ensure an ever-widening range of games reach an ever-widening market.

As far as the future of roleplaying is concerned, I am a fan of the 'minimalist rules' school myself - less time for chart reading, more time for reacting. I don't see why existing roleplaying gamers shouldn't be interested in new forms of the genre. *Call of Cthulhu* was released in 1981, and it took a long time before it reached its present popularity. The options in *Gumshoe* are slightly limiting, but try it this way. The rules say that if *all* the players co-operate they might just be able to solve a mystery in one game day. With a referee, however, it is possible to roleplay the encounters, and by using a dummy clock to let the detectives roam San Francisco working to a real deadline (and leaving messages for each other at various locations).

The argument that writing your own plot in *How To Host A Murder* applies equally to all rpgs in that you know something other players do not. If you roleplay properly that should not be a problem. To pay around £3 each for one evening's entertainment isn't that expensive compared with many activities (although, I agree, pricey in game terms). If all current roleplayers don't find that type of game 'appealing', as Mr Tamlyn seems to think, there's a good chance it will not be reviewed in magazines like *White Dwarf* (since it caters for 'the bulk of the current roleplaying market'). A chicken and egg situation.

To sum up, the future of roleplaying is good if:

- new areas of roleplaying are found
- roleplaying media publicise and review these new areas in a serious manner
- current roleplayers are less blinkered in what they play.

Yes, a very interesting article indeed. More of this sort of thing, please.

You raise some interesting points yourself, which I'll try and briefly cover. Firstly, the attitude of the news media towards rolegaming is hardly surprising when one considers the activities of the various live roleplaying groups and their ilk. If I was a reporter looking for a story I'd jump at a chance to cover a bunch of loonies who dress in silly costumes and hit each other with rubber swords. Serious newspapers and the colour supplements have given the hobby a fair coverage, but the tabloids won't go away just because we don't like them - if we don't want bad press we shouldn't encourage it by our irresponsible actions.

It is hard to act grown up when one is representing a hobby that covers an age range from 9 to 19 and beyond. To my mind, if we wish to attract more newcomers to our hobby we must make allowances for the fact that, initially at least, they will have no idea what we are talking about. Regular articles for beginners, ranging from overviews of popular systems to tips for making your first few games work properly, are what is needed, and I would argue that WD is exactly the place to print them. However, its readership have been very vocal in their dislike of material suited for beginners when it has been run in the past, and we can suppose that a new set of articles, looking back at the D&D range, for example, would meet with howls of complaint again.

Longer reviews of products seem solely designed to fill up space, in my own humble opinion. While a long, detailed review is useful for a new roleplaying game or major supplement, it can hardly be justified for the latest AD&D module or BattleTech supplement, for example. If a new product is important enough to deserve heavy coverage we will often afford it a run of back-up feature articles anyway. I feel it is very unlikely that WD will substantially increase the space given to reviews in the near future.

Incidentally, we have no control of where WD is placed by a newsagent (my local shop always puts it on the top shelf with the other so-called 'adult' magazines, though amongst the computer mags is also popular). If yours puts WDs in a peculiar place ask him why he does so, and point out that he'd sell more if he put them elsewhere!

I would hazard that roleplayers don't find the various Murder Mystery games to their taste because a) they are simplistic, b) they aren't fantasy, which is still the most popular media with rolegamers, and c) most 16-year olds don't hold too many dinner parties. What Pete was saying is that these types of games are to be congratulated for bringing a modified form of interactive game to a ***new*** *audience, who we should now be drawing into our own hobby. How we manage to do this without offending our unbearably conservative readership, though, is another matter. It will be an uphill struggle, I fear - I mean,* ***this*** *is a typical WD reader...*

A Gobbledigook Fan, Hampton, Middlesex: What? What? What? What? What? What? What? What? What? What? What? What? What? What? What? What? What? What? What?

What? I hear you reply. Gobbledigook reduced to half a page! I'm sure this error will be corrected in WD81.

P.S. Please can I have his autograph (if he can write, that is).

No, I wouldn't have put my name on that either.

Wout Thielmans, Bruges, Belgium: Re the review of *Lankhmar*. My god, I've never been so angered by any purchase I've ever made my c.8 years of roleplaying! That lump of paper contains more typos than the entire output of TSR up to 1980! We are promised: encounter tables for Nehwon - not one table in sight. We are promised new spells and a magic-weak system - we get a grouping together of old Clerical and Magical spells and that's it. We are promised a lot of short scenarios with level indications - we get some 10 garbled 'plot ideas' and 1 scenario amounting to a break-in with difficulties! The most ironic mistake is where we are promised stats for 2 (count em) new weapons, throwing axe and throwing dagger, and barely a paragraph later we only get the stats for one weapon. Add to this the fact that several lines are totally garbled and incomprehensible (ettryd grhtiei fgthye htuy???+zzay for the characters to raise the money' - see what I mean?) and you definitely do NOT have a professional module worth some £14-15, which is the price we in Belgium have to pay for it.

No, Wout, tell us if you don't like something! I guess you should take TSR's adverts with a pinch of salt in future, but on the whole I must say I thought Lankhmar was an impressive ten minutes' work.

Robert Povey, Leek, Staffs: After reading Mike Goldsmith's letter *(WD80)* I felt compelled to put pen to paper. I ask 'Why shouldn't kids admire Judge Dredd?' After all, we all need a hero to look up to in these times of 'moral decay' and 'ever increasing violence'. Surely it's better for kids to admire a figure of law and order than one of corruption and crime?

Judge Spencer, Marple, Cheshire: Citizen Mike Goldsmith, you will place yourself under house arrest for the use of an illegal expressive word and the slandering of a Judge with the words 'He is a murdering swine' - he being Judge Dredd of Mega-City One. A Brit-Cit Judge will be calling on you promptly.

Tom Deakin, Llangemmarch Wells, Powys: As a dedicated devotee of Joe 'I am the Law' Dredd and now the rpg, I was pleased to see the article in *WD80, Something Special*. All my Judges now have at least two heads each! But there is, I think, one essential skill all Dredders should have that Tutor Tynan missed, namely the 'Get out of a totally impossible situation because you've got to appear in 2000AD next week' skill.

This highly useful skill involves (at the GM's discretion) an extremely high percentage chance that in a totally impossible situation the PC Judge will be able to find some way out, usually with a feat of acrobatics, an improvised weapon or a passing H-Wagon!

One other thing. If you are going to play JDrp seriously you must be able to swear authentically, so I have compiled a small list of Dredd's better known vituperations: Drokk (most common by far), Grud, Creep, Oh Moley, Spug It, Dirtwad, Punk, Dok, Oh Cremola and Stomm.

These add much more flavour to a scenario. Take a look at the following example: just for a change a Judge is arresting a juve.

Judge: You there citizen, move it. You're under arrest.
Juve: No way.
BLAM BLAM... Becomes:
Judge: Drokk it! C'mere you dirtwad creep! You're under grudding arrest!!
Juve: Spug you, Judge!
BLAM BLAM... See?

Yes, er, thanks Tom. Couldn't you have sent a random table too?

Andrew Bell, St Austell, Cornwall: In *WD80* I read an article by Martin Veart about development point allotment upon level advancement in MERP *(Up and Coming)*. I am an avid supporter, nay, fan, of the Rolemaster system from which MERP was pilfered. Like MERP, in Rolemaster a character is assumed to be first level after adolescence, skill development and apprenticeships. He *then* assigns the development points (DPs) to skills that he wishes to develop *during* that level - whether they are skills already developed previously, or new ones!

For instance, if Grimnuts (to take Martin's example) wishes to develop a new (or old) skill in Broadsword, he must make a note of how many DPs he is going to pay in learning however many skill ranks that he wants to learn. If, during that level, the GM notes that Grimnuts doesn't so much as buy a broadsword, let alone attempt to teach himself or get tuition in the weapon, the GM is fully justified in telling Grimnuts where to get off when the latter demands his new skill ranks for which he paid his DPs.

By using this method of assigning DPs before starting a level, but gaining their benefit when one reaches the next level, it makes it impossible for Grimnuts to suddenly become handy at wielding a warhammer when he doesn't even know what one looks like!

Edmund Morgan, Sutton, Surrey: Martin Veart was right about one thing - his article *was* demented ramblings. Unfortunately he made a few errors.

Although he asks us to look at 4.25 he has not read the basics! Five skill ranks in 2-handed in one level? Shurely shome mishtake! It says in 3.6, 'A skill rank may be increased by one by using 1 DP. A skill rank may be increased by 2 by using a total of 3 DPs. A skill rank may not be increased by more than 2 ranks during the apprenticeship.' Aha, you say, this is for apprentices only! Look again, in 2.63; here it says, 'To develop a skill allocate development points to it. This process is identical to apprenticeship skill development.'

This means, quite simply, that most of Martin Veart's article is unnecessary. I do agree that spell lists cannot just materialise in the wilderness, but can be found in any large town or elven settlement. Some spell lists can be found elsewhere; for example, in a human castle 5% chance of a bard list, ranger list or open essence list, and 10% chance of a chance/open chanelling list.

Graham Staplehurst, Putney, London: Some other misapprehensions revolve around the nature of the ranks, which are only worth 5% at first; later (at higher development) each is worth only 2%, then 1%. Secondly, giving them '%' notation is misleading, since they are not resolved on a % chance basis, but rather the total 'rank' (including bonuses, which Veart misnames 'values') is *added* to a percentile roll (itself open-ended) then referred to a table. A 5% jump in combat rating that is Offensive Bonus, might be worth an extra point or two of damage or an added critical grade. MERP does not offer the PC a crude 'chance' of performing an action, it uses a mixture of luck (die roll), character skill and player ingenuity to give a grading on the relative success or failure of an attempt.

Seen in these terms, the basic learning jump of +30 in a skill which Veart complains of (from an unskilled -25 to +5 for the first 'rank' obtained) is a realistic interpretation of the learning process/curve, and one which is contiguous with the later decline in the rate of skill improvement. Perhaps the +30 jump seems a great deal to Veart; on the other hand it is wisely said 'a little knowledge is dangerous'. Even facing a measly orc, an OB of +5 with spear is little better than -25!

Jeremy Lowe, Chesterfield, Derbys: Congratulations on *WD80*, the best effort for over a year! The articles were all useful and interesting, and *Things Ancient & Modern* had that spark of originality vital for the future of the hobby as a whole. The only let-down came in the comic strips - both Thrud & Gobbledigook were almost completely pathetic!

In response to Terry Kench *(Letters, WD80)*, I would use resurrection and similar forms of Raise spells very sparingly indeed, for one good reason. Imagine the scene: a powerful character dies, and his soul begins the journey to the eagerly waiting God of Death (or perhaps he is just on his way to the Elysian Fields for an eternity of perfection) when suddenly he is dragged unceremoniously back and dumped into the body of a badger (or, if he's lucky, his *own* body) by some twerp who thinks he's helping out. If the character is vital to the campaign and did not want to die, a Raise Dead spell might be in order, but if not the risks in angering the God of Death would be too great. As an alternative to this, you could allow other PCs to go off to the Underworld to rescue the characters from the clutches of Death before he is inextricably enmeshed, as happened all the time in Greek mythology. This, it goes without saying, should be a *very* difficult and rare occurence.

And finally, we couldn't leave you without a mention of that distressing damsel from across the ocean. The following people are some of the many who 'referred' to Laurielle Miller in their letters this month:

Dave Dickins of Surrey, J Marshall of Grantham, Douglas Thomson of Aberdeenshire, Gavin D Coles of Orpington, MC Farrall of Scunthorpe, *and* K Jones of Cheltenham. *We will, of course, be writing to all of their parents, who will no doubt be very interested to hear of what their offspring's little hobby really entails. Incidentally, if there are any more Laurielle fans out there, can I suggest that instead of writing begging letters for photos, autographs and measurements you simply send us some money; if we get enough we'll fly the lady over for Games Day so you can take as many photos and measurements as you wish!*

Letters edited by Marc Gascoigne
Marc Gascoigne edited by Paul Cockburn
Letterhead by Marcus L Rowland

CRITICAL MASS

A regular book review column, written by Dave Langford

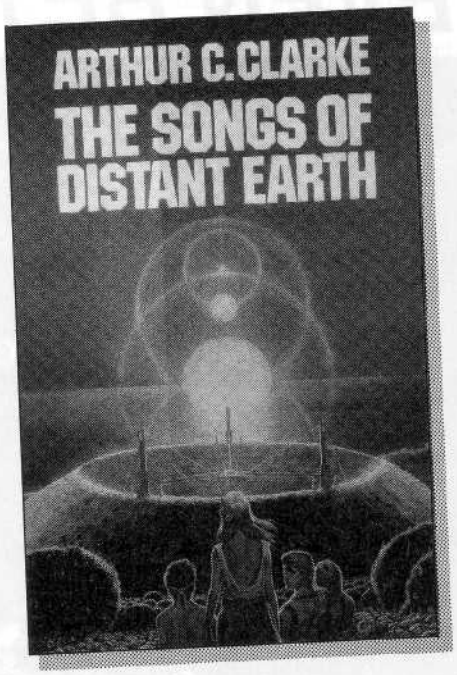
The Door Deliquesced

Eye-catching title, eh? For forty years SF writers have been attempting scene-setting lines as cleverly offhand as Heinlein's "The door dilated". Dropped casually into an early sentence of *Beyond This Horizon,* those three words pitchforked readers into a high-tech future where doors irised open (to f2.8?) and this was such an everyday event that no comment was called for. Now it's 1986 and I'm at the sentence (given a paragraph of its own so we'll appreciate the cleverness) "The door deliquesced". Subsequent paragraphs explain that, yes this door really does melt down into a puddle, which you must be careful not to step in, since the liquid rapidly foams back up into solidity and could lend a whole new meaning to getting your foot in the door. As Walt Willis once put it, "Cor, chase my Aunt Fanny round the psionics laboratory."

This conversation-stopper is from Samuel R. Delany's **Stars In My Pocket Like Grains Of Sand** (Grafton 464pp, £2.95). Delany's early books were full of poetry, brilliance and wild lack of discipline; twenty years on, little has changed. There's an admirably inventive far-future background: thousands of inhabited worlds, the information Web that links them, two major political/religious/philosophical factions (the Family and the Sygn), humans and aliens in multi-species extended marriages ... But also there are indigestible gobs of exposition, with characters lecturing each other because Delany wants to lecture the reader. He also misplaces some of his heightened, poetic prose: "Tubes drained off the puce and fuchsia biles that, in a sort of antidigestive process, had, by their chemical actions, healed; had, by their tidal actions, exercised." If this is how Delany wants to describe intensive care, fine, but the sentence is from the *verbal report* of a bureaucrat relating the patient's recovery, and (like many others) in that context it's unbelievable.

The story has a space-operatic background (who destroyed the burnt-out planet?) and, at stage centre, a homosexual love affair (oh, those sensual descriptions of cabled muscles and bitten fingernails!). Neither mystery not romance is resolved, all that being kept for Book Two - fearfully titled **The Splendour and Misery of Bodies, of Cities**. Book One is brilliant, uneven, insufferable, an important piece of SF. I haven't even mentioned the agonizing far-future pronouns, whereby I would have to refer to your editor (or indeed anyone else) as "she", unless I fancied him...

Bob Shaw's **The Ragged Astronauts** (Gollancz 310pp, £9.95) is much more traditional fun, billed as the first of a trilogy - but you can trust this author, and Shaw enough the book has believable characters and a satisfying beginning, middle and end. It turns on one of those marvellously daft notions which only SF can offer: realistic interplanetary travel by hot-air balloon. Planet Land is suffering a deadly ecological threat (whose roots will be guessed ahead of time by experienced fans), and escape plans call for balloon evacuation to the binary twin Overland. The airborne scenes are excellent, stirring my jaded sense of wonder. The celestial mechanics ... well, I was spared the effort of putting on my physicist's hat and doing sums by a grandiose ploy which must have Newton developing high angular momentum in his grave. *Pi*, in this book, equals 3. Therefore the universe isn't ours, the gravitational constant is different, and physicists will kindly pipe down. Meanwhile Grafton have reissued an earlier Shaw favourite - **The Palace of Eternity** (221pp, £2.50), one of the few SF novels to achieve a successful blend of physics and metaphysics. Both recommended.



Once again Arthur C Clarke has switched on his word processor and pressed the well-worn keys labelled FICTION and KEENING ELEGIAC TONE OF VOICE, to produce **The Songs of Distant Earth** (Grafton 182pp, £9.95) - previously seen as a 1957 short story and a 1979 film outline. In 1957, it was Girl Meets Spaceman for a one-night stand as his ship drops by for water; a tearful parting, and he blasts off into the night. The liberated 1985 version is much the same, with more dialogue, better props (quantum space drive, *another* space elevator, terraforming), a fistful of added elements which are barely developed and serve only to dilute the story (intelligent lobsters, incidental tragedies, disruptive effects of the visiting ship on the girl's colony world), and the identical lack of appropriate emotion. Let's face it, Clarke's characters can only manage three emotions: intellectual hunger, sorrow for bygone glories (here a nova-zapped Earth), and awe in the face of the infinite. None is appropriate to a bittersweet love affair; with this vacuum at the book's core, the other bits don't fuse together but just lie there. Pity.

Frederik Pohl's **Black Star Rising** (Gollancz 282pp, £9.95) is brisker interstellar stuff with a vein of satire. The USA and USSR having zapped each other because Reagan's 'Star Wars' nonsense has precipitated World War III (Pohl, you may gather, doesn't approve), China has moved in to administer the wrecked countries, instituting healthy, all-American practices like Mississippi paddy-fields and self-criticism sessions. Great embarrassment results when extraterrestrial invaders make the traditional demand to be taken to the President of the USA ... The alien 'erks', so eager to aid justice, take sides, and help us annihilate our planet, which may be intended as a satire on some superpower's foreign policy. Good-natured stuff with a few sharp points.

I liked Jack Vance's **Lyonesse II: The Green Pearl** (Grafton 360pp, £3.50) rather better than Volume I, perhaps because the fantasy action seems more coherent. Further quasi-mediaeval political manoeuvrings, magical skulduggery, and ornately polished dialogue; grimmer than most Vance tales, but always enjoyable for its sheer style - Vance probably writes elegantly ironic and barbed shopping lists. At least one more sequel follows.

The Blackcollar by Timothy Zahn (Arrow 272pp, £1.95) is the latest 'Venture' novel of zap-happy SF, and one of the series' better offerings. Blackcollars are not people who don't wash their necks, but super-guerrillas made redundant by the fall of the Terran Empire. But there remains one slim chance! After a few too many pages of lasers, paralysis darts, *nunchaku* and *shuriken,* our heroes win fairly excitingly through. The conclusion has a touch of political realism which almost makes the whole farrago credible. Lightweight entertainment.

Michael Moorcock's peculiar brand of sword-and-sorcery is also lightweight, but with above-normal inventiveness, a touch of surrealism, and a good line in doomed Byronic heroes. **The Swords of Corum** (Grafton 509pp, £9.95) is a hardback omnibus of the first three Corum books, fondly remembered for the fantasy *Realpolitik* of their finale: not merely the Chaos mob but *all* the gods are liquidated, leaving the world a healthier place. Fundamentalists may cancel their subscriptions at this point ... **The Crystal and the Amulet** (Savoy £4.95 - nice to see you back, Savoy) is part two of James Cawthorn's pictorial adaptation of the Hawkmoon 'Runestaff' tetralogy, a bit confusingly synoptic in places, but powerfully drawn in sombre black-and-white. With glints of humour amid the horror, too, as witness the unfortunate slave suffering the consequences of playing *Call of Cthulhu* in the background of one sequence.

Reprints of books already reviewed: **Kiteworld** by Keith Roberts (Penguin 288pp, £2.95, excellent), **The Man in the Tree** by Damon Knight (Penguin 246pp, £2.95, good), **Gilgamesh the King** by Robert Silverberg (Pan 300pp, £2.95, pretty good) and **Dragons of Autumn Twilight** by a committee of hacks (Penguin 448pp, £2.95 - and I thought this one-time 'quality' publisher had hit rock bottom with Jack Chalker ...).

I realised in terror that the deadline was here, and ran for the exit. The door detumesced.

20-20 VISION

A Bi-monthly column covering fantasy and science fiction movies, by Alex Stewart

The Way Of The Warrior

Summer's the slow time for film releasing in Britain, while the companies pause to relax in the sun before launching the traditional blitzkrieg of whimsy in the run-up to Christmas. This makes life a lot easier for the reviewers too; it gives us the chance to consider the fewer titles on offer in the detail they deserve, instead of wrapping them up in a couple of paragraphs and hurrying on to the next.

Some of you may remember I did that to **Highlander** (15) last time round, and I had a number of reservations about it. Since then I've had a chance to see the British release print, instead of the mutilated American version shown at the first preview, and I make no apologies for coming back to it now.

The British version is so much better, it's almost a different movie. Instead of a rambling quest scenario, lurching arbitrarily from one action setpiece to the next, the full version of *Highlander* is a subtle and tightly-plotted interplay of situation and character.

As you probably know by now, Christopher Lambert plays Connor McLeod, an immortal 16th Century warrior, in conflict with others of his kind in contemporary New York. This is more than just a run-of-the-mill Sword and Sorcery quest in modern dress, though; the core of the film is how immortality affects people, and what it means specifically to Connor McLeod.

This puts an extraordinary burden on Lambert, since, in effect, the film only holds together for as long as we believe in McLeod. That he succeeds so well is an eloquent testament to his skill as an actor. His performance carries conviction throughout, whether radiating eager enthusiasm as his powers unfold under the tutelage of his mentor Ramirez, or, later, the weary detatchment of a man nearly five centuries old.

Sean Connery is perfectly cast as the flamboyant and raffish Ramirez, as is Roxanne Hart as the police scientist McLeod begins, reluctantly, to love. The other place in the lime light, though, unquestionably belongs to Clancy Brown as the Kurgan, an immortal beserker intent on killing McLeod. The two are presented as absolute opposites: McLeod clinging desperately to the things that still make him human, while the Kurgan, long since resigned to the fact that he isn't, has abandoned them entirely. Radiating barely-controlled menace, he takes an almost mischieveous glee in the use of his powers.

The film gains a great deal from its complex narrative structure, in which events in the past parallel or directly affect those of the present. The transitions from one to the other are bold and imaginative, a characteristic of Russell Mulcahy's direction. *Highlander* is visually stunning, from the timeless grandeur of the Scottish landscape to the surrealist urban jungles of New York. And the sword fights are terrific.

This time I've no doubts at all. See this film.

Another movie to deal with the way of the warrior, though this time rather more realistically, is **The Karate Kid II** (PG). I expected to hate this; sequels are usually nothing more than a limp and cynical attempt to cash in on the success of the original. But I was wrong. Instead of taking the easy way out, and wheeling the same old villains on for a second round, the script builds firmly and inventively on the themes of the first.

This time it's the *sensei* Miyagi (Pat Morita) who is faced with an implaccable enemy during a visit to his family village in Okinawa. But, once again, the conflict is on more than a simple physical level. The film is about a clash of opposing philosophies: duty, honour, and personal feeling, and a centuries-old culture in conflict with a modern, westernised one. Central to it all is the most basic principle of all the martial arts; physical violence is a lousy way of settling differences, and almost any other solution is preferable. In the end, of course, this is the philosophy that's triumphantly vindicated.

In the meantime Miyagi and his student Danny (Ralph Macchio) face a number of skirmishes with the villains. The fight scenes are briskly and excitingly choreographed, but the emphasis is always firmly on the interplay of the characters, and the film is far stronger as a result.

Though it lacks the baroque bravura of *Highlander, The Karate Kid II* is highly enjoyable. Positive and upbeat, without descending to mawkishness, this too is one to catch.

ANCIENT & MODERN

A Scenario for Schizophrenic Roleplayers

by Graham Staplehurst

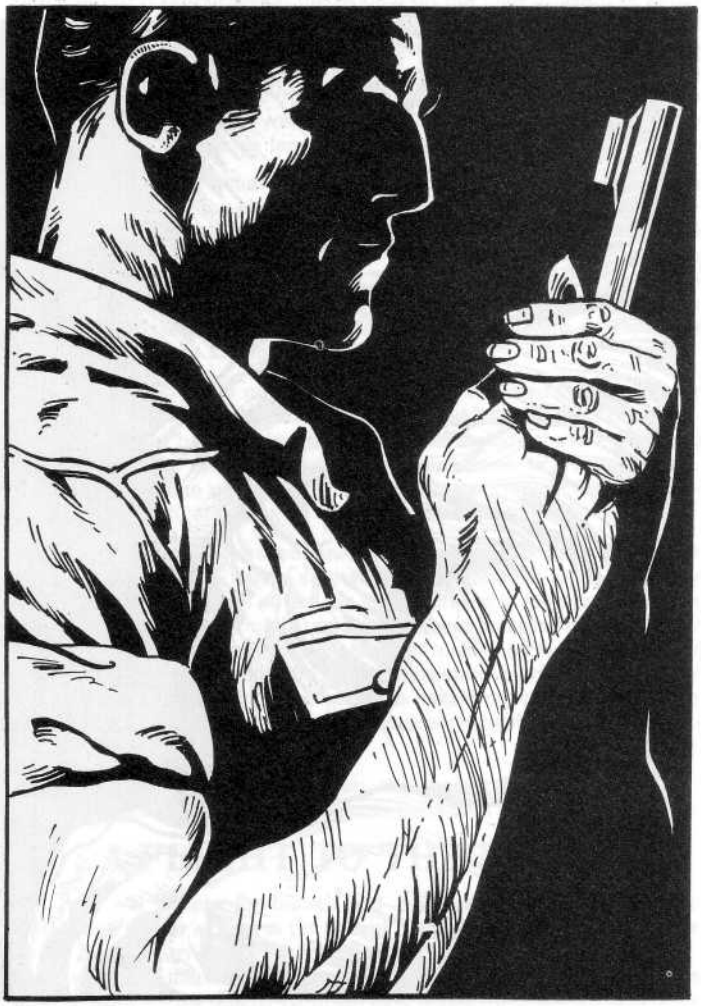
This is the second part of a two part scenario, based on the works of the British fantasy/horror writer, Brian Lumley. In it, players can take on a dual persona: as adventurers from the land of Theem'hdra, a mystical land from a time before memory, and as Investigators in 1920s Earth. As such, the game can be played as an Advanced *Dungeons & Dragons* adventure or as a *Call of Cthulhu* adventure, without any problem. The text that follows assumes that *both* systems will be run in parallel, with *AD&D* for the characters from the ancient world, and *CoC* for the '20s adventurers.

The scenario cannot be played without Part One, which appeared last issue.

At the conclusion of the last installment, the adventurers from the '20s had travelled to the Chateau Casson, on an island near the coast of France, to interrupt a ceremony which would have spelt disaster for the world. As they did so, they felt a strange pulling sensation, and then passed into unconsciousness as they were swept across some cosmic distance to arrive in the Tower of the sorceror, Teh Atht. Inexplicably, they have traded places with their ancient counter-parts, the adventurers from Theem'hdra. For both groups, their story is only just beginning....

M3 : TIME-TRAVEL-SICKNESS

Although the modern characters disappear from the summoning chamber in the Chateau Casson, they are soon replaced — within a few seconds — by the ancient characters, who experience the same tugging at their chests as the Thromb recoils through Time and drags their strands with it.



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The characters have been swapped in Time! Players running both ancient and modern characters will have no problem in understanding what has happened, though they should not act as if their characters have a clear understanding of all that has occured. Their ancient characters will have been snatched from the Tower of Teh Atht, and brought to the 'strange' lands of 20th Century Earth, though none of them can possibly understand this at first.

Where the players have been running only ancient characters, the GM should have Teh Atht describe the plans of the NPCs in the modern era, up until the time when they interrupt the ceremony. Suddenly, the characters feel that same unbearable pulling sensation as described above; they are swept along, as if borne by a river, and are then deposited in a strange chamber, with no idea of where — or when — they are.

The first problem facing the ancient characters is Mme Chalbert's enraged coven. The witch herself has collapsed and is slumped against the wall, unconscious or dead. All members of the coven are insane through dealing with evil and iniquitous things so frequently, and rush the newly arrived characters, trying to overpower them (they have no weapons). If more than three of the coven are slain, the rest will try and flee, thus warning the guards (if there are any still around). The first four to get to the boathouse will use the motorboat to escape, the others may simply fling themselves into the sea in a lunatic attempt to escape the characters.

Nothing useful can be gained from any member of the coven, even if captured and somehow persuaded to talk — other than the fact that none of the ancient characters can speak an intelligible language (unless they have magical help). If the characters remain where they are after cleaning the island up, they will be temporarily safe, and if anyone goes to sleep, they can be contacted by Teh Atht sending dreams through the modern characters now in Theem'hdra. Teh Atht can explain what he thinks has happened, but knows that he cannot hope to reverse the process as the forces involved were inconceivably great. However, he hopes that the sorcery of Mylakhrion might help switch the characters back and return Time to its original state.

There is a problem however. Mylakhrion is dead, and has been for thousands of years. All his magical knowledge, the greatest ever assembled in Theem'hdra, was left in his impregnable tower-castle far to the north, on Tharamoon, the Mountain Island. Only those powerful enough to get through the many magical wards and guards that Mylakhrion placed about the tower can gain the information concealed inside. This is where Teh Atht and the modern characters are off to. The ancient characters are instructed to undertake a journey as well, if possible. If Teh Atht succeeds in finding a spell to re-transpose the characters, he thinks that it will be much more likely to work if the two parties concerned were at the same point in Space, thus easing their translation through Time.

Since the millions of years that separate the two eras have also separated the continents of the world just as dramatically, neither the ancient nor the modern characters will have any idea where the modern-day site of Mylakhrion's tower might be found. However, Teh Atht thinks there is just one possibility — the man who discovered his time capsule, Theldred Gustau. He knows from previous dream-contact with the modern characters that they discovered his name appended to an article on Theem'hdra, and thinks that with the information in the capsule, Thelred should be able to locate the co-ordinates of the tower.

However, at this stage the ancient characters' problems are mainly (i) to get off the isle and (ii) to survive in this startlingly different environment. If the coven members have not taken the boat in the boathouse, the characters could use it — if they can figure out how to operate the engine. There is also the question of costume and equipment, since the ancient characters will be wearing the same clothing as they were in Theem'hdra, which may not be entirely appropriate to France in the present day. Similarly their equipment will be antiquated. Other factors to remember are their complete unfamiliarity with any technology, language and currency in Europe. There is plenty of equipment in and around the

house, and also money (both English and French — though whether the PCs will recognise the paper currency is up to the GM). Any treasure the characters have with them will be much inflated in value.

Within 3 days (faster if the characters are coping well and you want to speed up the action), the servants will return. With them will come a local policeman to check that everything is alright — strange lights were seen at the Chateau on the night of the ritual by the fisherman that pilots the boat.

If the modern characters had no boat of their own and the Chateau's boat is taken, the characters will have to wait until this party arrives and then try and steal the boat or force the fisherman to take them. Remember that characters have to eat and sleep during this adventure!

Working Magic

Because of this time's distance from their own era, characters will find spells have a chance of failing to work. This rule applies to all casters of magic spells *other than Druids*. For a spell to work, a caster must roll d% and get at least:

((15xlevel of spell) - level of caster) %

GMs may also wish to apply additional penalties to clerics whose deities have few or no worshippers in this time, such as disallowing the recuperation of any spells over 3rd level.

However, everyday inhabitants of Europe will all save as 0-level humans, which may well mean that spells end up working more often! It is unlikely that magic-users and illusionists will have been holding their spell books when transtemporated, but any other equipment normally carried with characters will have come with them. You may wish to let characters find a limited supply of spells in Mme Chalbert's spell books.

A4 : THE WHIPLASH OF TIME

The modern characters arrive at Teh Atht's Tower and are immediately taken by his servants to rooms to rest whilst he casts spells for their immediate protection from further Time disruptions. Each will wake up after 25-CON hours; if you are playing the Modern scenario only, this is a good time to send all the players out of the room and call them in one by one. Examining the first person to wake, if Teh Atht detects any signs of insanity or great loss of sanity, he will be able to cure, through magical and medical means, up to 1D10 SAN points immediately. He can also remove the effects of any 'temporary' insanity.

When all the characters have awoken, he will attempt to explain their predicament. This may, of course, cause a loss of SAN, particularly combined with their somewhat exotic surroundings — each character must make a SAN roll or lose 1D6 points. This will be regained when (if) the characters return to their own time. However, Teh Atht further explains they will need to make a perilous journey to the tower of a long-dead sorceror in the hope that he left a spell which will help to return them and bring their ancestors back. The hole which they have torn through Time (however inadvertently) will be slowly healing up, and if it closes before the characters have swapped back, they will surely die — their ancestors, now in the Future, cannot have descendants at the right time!

Fortunately, Teh Atht has been able to discover that Gorgos has been severely damaged by the backfiring of all the energy he put into the Ritual. This means that Teh Atht is free to go off to Mylakhrion's Tower and see to the re-ordering of Time without fear for the safety of Klühn or Theem'hdra, who he and he alone protects from the menace of the Thromb.

Before they can set out, Teh Atht will get the characters to transmit as much information as possible to their helpless ancestors stranded in the strange 20th Century. The latter are unable to speak the language (although Teh Atht naturally has spells which enable *him* to speak with the modern characters) and will have great difficulties using complicated devices and machinery.

The modern characters may also want to learn more about Theem'hdra, the world, and its perils (see the **Theem'hdra** section, last issue, p28). They will discover for themselves that, in the same way that magic may not function in the 20th Century, so complicated pieces of equipment may not always work in Theem'hdra. Anything about the general level of technology prevalent on the continent (pulleys, levers, wheels, simple steels) will only work if the character makes a Luck Roll. This must be made *each* time a use is attempted. For example, a gun might go off, then fail to fire, then work again. Apply penalties for very complicated things, such as watches. Additionally, equipment which is powered (eg, an electric lamp) may start drawing Magic Points from characters! Teh Atht will find suitable clothing for them.

M4 : THELDRED GUSTAU

The ancient characters will have learnt of the whereabouts of the man who found Teh Atht's time capsule from the modern characters. Gustau's address means little to the ancient characters, but there should be a map in the Chateau somewhere, which will help them visualise where North Yorkshire is, at the very least.

How the characters decide to reach it is another matter. There is sufficient fuel in the motorboat's tanks to cross the Channel and get as far as Dover. There are also extra supplies in the boathouse if anyone looks, certainly enough to get them to Scarborough or Whitby under normal circumstances. They will also need food for the journey; though there is plenty in the kitchen, they will need to figure out how to use a tin opener!

If the characters are encountered by Europeans at any point, it is likely that they will be taken for foreigners, perhaps from the Far East, if they speak in their native Theem'hdran tongue. It would probably be useful to allow a magic-user in the party to find a spell equivalent to ***comprehend languages*** or ***tongues*** amongst Mme Chalbert's books of spells.

Should the characters kill anyone off the island, or be seen leaving the island where there are bodies to be discovered later by the police, they will be pursued by the police. However, without definite proof of their guilt, it is unlikely that detectives from one country (eg, France) would be able to continue their investigations in another. Give the characters the benefit of the doubt if they have been behaving sensibly and not wantonly slaughtering peasants.

One other important factor in the characters' travels will be the weather, so make sure that you have some way of generating this realistically and judge its effects on their speed and any problems it might cause them. Also, you must determine beforehand whether any of the ancient characters have any useful relevant skills, such as boat-handling.

By far the safest way of getting to Gustau will be by going as far as possible by boat and then completing the journey on foot across the windswept Yorkshire Moors, out of sight of human habitation. Rosedale Abbey is a tiny village in a valley south of Rosedale Moor, between Wheedale Moor and Spaunton Moor. The closest town is Pickering, 8 miles to the south. If you like, you could have the characters encounter a lone farmer out shooting, or a werewolf — perhaps there is truth in the old legends....

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Farmer - Human; F1; hp 9; AT 1; D fist 1-3 or shotgun; Al N; AC 9; Move 12; THACO 20; S15, I10, W8, D15, Co15 (+1), Ch12; Size M; SA shotgun + 20 shells.

The farmer, Mr Hinchliffe, will shoot anyone acting in a 'shady' manner as he will assume that they are poaching. His shotgun is good at ranges up to 30' and fires as a magic wand for an automatic 2-16 points of damage, or half if a save vs wands is made.

Werewolf (MM p63) - HD 4+3; hp 23; AT 1; D 2-8; Al CE; AC 5; Move 15; THACO 15; Int Ave; Size M; SA lycanthropy; SD shape change; silver or magic weapons to hit.

The werewolf will shadow the characters for an hour or so in human shape before deciding to attack one of the rear party members. It surprises on a 1-3 (d6) and if it manages to kill a person, it will change back to human form to carry them away as fast as it can. It will flee if 18 or more points of damage are done to it.

Once the ancient characters get to Theldred Gustau, they will need to convince him of both their origin and their plight. If they have thought to bring along anything magical with them, or can perform an act of magic, he will believe them. Also, showing an understanding of the written language used by Teh Atht should persuade him, as he has never shared its secrets with anyone. Naturally, talking to Gustau will be a major problem, but since he knows the written language and is a linguist anyway, he will pick up the speech fairly rapidly. Initially, the party could communicate with him on scraps of paper.

Once they have got over to Gustau that they need to discover the whereabouts of the site of Mylakhrion's tower, he will feverishly beetle away with his stack of Teh Atht's miniature tomes and a huge modern atlas. After a day and night of almost continuous study, including three hours at night outside studying the stars, he will be able to calculate the required position. It turns out to be in Norway, about 50 miles south of the Arctic Circle and close to the border with Sweden, outside a little town called Sløtavden. Theldred Gustau will have to go into Scarborough to see if there is any easy way of making the trip. Characters may accompany him, but will have to think of an excuse for their presence.

A steamship leaves from Newcastle-upon-Tyne for Trondheim twice weekly, the 750-mile passage costing £18/10s each way. From there, they could hire a motor coach or sleigh (depending on the time of year), or catch the train to Snasa and merely have to make the last 45 miles of the 170 mile trip on their own. Sløtavden lies on a hillside overlooking the Faxevatten, a lake which separates Norway and Sweden. Gustau estimates that total expenses for the trip, including getting the ancient characters back, accomodation etc, will be around £100 per person. However, he only has £350 in savings (and can't mortgage the Hall as it is rented).

Adventurers, being what they are, will either have sufficient extra boodle on them, or the equivalent in saleable items, or will be quite happy to arrange to relieve someone of their burdensome riches. Exactly how they go about it is up to the players — only note that Theldred Gustau will not help in the execution of any criminal act, although he will help plan. Possibilities are raiding a bank, holding up a train or rich person's car and so on. Let the players do exactly what they want at this stage and simply provide suitable opposition.

Once financing for the operation is arranged, Theldred Gustau will hit upon the next problem — getting into Norway. Naturally, none of the ancient characters have passports. Possibilities include the use of magic (eg, **invisibility** or **charm**), bribes to the ship's crew to smuggle them, or to port officials to let them in. Obtaining a passport might also be possible if birth certificates can be forged, or a clerk bribed.

Meanwhile, the characters must avoid being caught. Hopefully, they will avoid all contact with locals, so that no suspicions are aroused. Nosey parkers in the village will notice the large increase in food consumption at the Hall. A policeman might make an innocent courtesy call on Gustau and panic the characters. A cover story will have to be made up for their trip to Norway, since people are bound to be curious about a large party of foreigners. Finally, you might want to hassle the players even more by having mishaps occur, such as an accident which needs medical attention.

All through this time of preparation, the ancient characters will be in dream-contact with their modern counterparts with Teh Atht's assistance.

A5 : A FLIGHT TO THE ICE

Teh Atht will arrange for himself and the modern characters to fly to Mylakhrion's tower as soon as the ancient characters have established its site on the 20th Century earth. The sorceror has a **flying carpet** capable of carrying 4 persons. If there are more than three investigators, other arrangements must be made for the others. He might have to risk travelling overland or by sea, or using a number of flying steeds, such as hippogriffs. He might have some other magical items capable of transporting people through the air.

The flight or journey is not without the occasional diversion, naturally, for Theem'hdra is a world of fantastic creatures as the ancient characters would have been able to tell them. Their voyage takes the modern characters around the fringe of the great Inner Sea, across the continent towards the Frostlands, and then along the edge of the glaciers that creep from the North Pole, over Khrissa, to far Tharamoon, site of Mylakhrion's tower of old. Over the course of the journey, the modern characters may see things — or meet things — totally beyond their comprehension. You must run as many encounters as you see fit, including some that face the modern characters with NPCs in northern Theem'hdra (see the *Theem'hdra* section last issue for some background in which to base your ideas). Below are some simple encounters, each fraught with its own dangers. Use as many as you feel is appropriate.

Wyvern

A wyvern swoops out of the sky at the party and will attempt to grab one member in its jaws (roll randomly to see who it attacks, excluding Teh Atht). This creature is clumsy in the air and can therefore be avoided by careful flying after its initial attack, or driven off by hits causing more than half its hit points (ie, more than 15). If it manages to catch someone, by killing them with a single bite or rolling 90%+ to hit, it will dive straight to the ground and fly low to its cave.

Wyvern:
STR 39 CON 20 SIZ 40 INT 5 POW 15
DEX 7 Hit Pts 30 Move 7 SAN Loss 1D6/nil
Attacks - Bite 60% 1D10+2D6; Tail 60% 1D6+poison
Armour - 10pt skin

An impaling hit with the bite attack means that the character has been caught by the Wyvern's jaws and suffers the damage bonus (2D6) each round automatically. The Wyvern will fly off with them to its cave, flying low over the countryside to evade pursuit. An impaling hit with the tail injects poison (level 18) which will cause death if the character fails a RR. The poison takes 1D6+4 rounds to take effect; a successful *Treat Poison* skill use allows an extra save at the lower level.

Storm

The weather gets very dark and winds and clouds gather fiercely. A strong storm is blowing and the characters must either land and get under cover or attempt to ride it out. The storm will bring gale force winds and lots of rain. Characters who let themselves get soaked stand a good chance of catching cold or a worse infection. One way of avoiding the storm if flying will be to get above the cloud layer.

Characters not strapped down whilst flying on something in the storm must roll under STR on 3d6 to avoid being blown off by a gust of wind. This roll should be made every half-hour, and there is a cumulative +1 penalty for each half-hour flying in heavy weather. Visibility will be severely limited as well, so it may not be noticed that someone has fallen off until too late! Finally, each hour there is also a 5% chance that one character will be struck by a lightning bolt for 1d10x1d6 points of damage, halved if the character makes a save. If this would be enough to kill them, a roll under CON on 3d6 means that they survive the blast with 1 hit point.

Freezing Cold

Unless protected by special clothing, a raging fire or magical means, the characters each take 1d6 points of frostbite damage per hour they spend in this pocket of sub-zero air blown down from the arctic glaciers. Damage taken is doubled if the characters are skimpily clad or wet. Teh Atht is already magically protected against the cold and will not notice it: it is up the characters to ask him for similar protection. This will mean that they have to stop, as Teh Atht cannot cast spells whilst flying. You may wish to have some permanent effects of frostbite if a character takes more than half their total hits in cold damage, such as loss of toes, fingers, nose etc.

Giant Eagles

Two giant eagles are spotted circling overhead and screech at the party. If the travellers carry on in the same direction, they will pass into the eagles' nesting area and the eagles will attack until the party leaves it. If the adventurers deviate to one side or the other, the eagles will merely screech a bit more and see them off without attacking. The eagles are large and could knock a person off a **flying carpet** or even a steed. Note that the eagles are intelligent and may be friendly towards those that show concern for them. They can talk, but only their own language.

2 Giant Eagles:
STR 30 CON 18 SIZ 24 INT 12 POW 15
DEX 20 Hit Pts 21 Move 5/12
Attacks - Bite 45% 1D8+1D6; Claws 45% 1D6+1D6
Armour - 2 pt feathers

Messenger-bat

A messenger-bat bearing good tidings arrives for Teh Atht. It has been sent by Ikrish Sarn (assuming he is still alive, if not then by one of Teh Atht's apprentices keeping the Tower for him) to inform the White Sorceror that Gorgos' ruin appears to be complete. The backlash of the Beast Outside Time's departure nearly slew the Thromb and the vast majority of Gorgos' false priests left the Temple of the Secret Gods. The Temple was then ransacked by a mob of irate Klühnish citizens and burnt down. Gorgos is reported to have fled by some magical device.

A6 : BLEAK HOUSE

Mylakhrion's Tower is a bleak pinnacle of greenish-black stone, thrusting up out of the eternal cold snows and ice of the region. Temperatures here vary between 0°C to -10°C during the day (possibly 5° higher in the summer) and drop by around 20° at night. There is an added wind chill factor of up to 30° dependant on the strength of the wind and its direction (strong and northerly winds being the worst).

The Tower proper is only about 25' wide, but rises from a large rectangular base some 180' deep and 120' wide, around 30' or 40' high. There are no visible windows in the structure at all. The expansive building at the foot of the Tower is built of the same sort of rock, impervious to all natural and most magical attacks. There is a pair of huge bronze doors, uncorroded and engraved with the Elder Sign. Other signs and sigils are engraved all around the lower building. The Tower stands a massive 300' tall, looming over even the huge glacier that towers in the valley behind.

Teh Atht must undertake a complex ritual to properly open the doors and clear many of the magical traps laid by Mylakhrion eleven hundred years ago. This takes about three hours during which time Teh Atht must not be disturbed. You may wish to have the party kept occupied by a small pack of wolves:

Wolves

STR 13 CON 11 SIZ 11 INT- POW 12
DEX 13 Hit Pts 13 Move 12 SAN Loss nil
Attacks: Bite 30% % 1D8
Armour: 1pt fur
Skills: Tracking (smell) 80%, Spot Hidden 60%

Adjust the number of wolves attacking to the numbers and strength of the party. The wolves will be frightened by gunfire or held at bay by fire. If they have been unsuccessful in attacking anyone after about 20 minutes, they will slink off. If any wolf is killed, the rest flee, howling loudly.

When Teh Atht has eventually got the doors open, the party will see a most imposing entrance hall, blazing with white walls, a golden yellow ceiling and a green floor that feels like freshly cut grass. Magic lights throng the air and the whole place feels like some primaeval heaven, a Paradise on Earth. The aura of the place is such that anyone who has lost SAN on this adventure will immediately regain 10% of the points lost (round fractions below ½ down). However, the lure of the room will also seduce any character failing a Luck Roll into wanting to remain there for ever and ever. Such characters will angrily resist any attempt to lead them away, but will not resort to violence. They will also be immune to threats of violence against their person; however if such acts are carried out, they gain an extra Luck Roll to resist for each point of damage inflicted.

Once over this initial trap, Teh Atht will carefully lead the party through a maze-like series of corridors and rooms towards the centre of the building. There is no map for this area. Teh Atht will make sure he has tight control over the party and if any disobey his orders, you should invent some mechanical or magical trap to teach them a lesson: an illusory beast which charges them down; an apparition calling for a SAN roll against a 1D10 loss; a drugged dart to slow the character down or put them unconscious; and so on.

All the corridors and rooms have a form of magical *confusion* over them which must be counteracted by Resistance Rolls against INT *and* POW whenever there is a choice of directions to proceed. The magic has a POW of 25. If one of the rolls fails, the character will not be able to remember which passage was chosen later; if both fail, the character will be sure a *different* route was taken. Make up your own ideas for the areas passed through. Here are some examples:

a corridor of chequerboard tiles lined with alcoves containing metal replicas of botanical specimens (flowers, plants, branches) stood in carved jade urns.
a room built like the inside of a beehive and smelling strongly of honey.
a hallway with walls of beaten copper mirrors and dazzling amber inlay on a teak parquet floor, lined with ebony benches.
a chamber with a mosaic in blue and green glass which at first sight looks like a pool of cool waters, spanned by a bridge of fine-spun yellow glass which is trapped to paralyse anyone stepping on it.
a room with a huge circular table in it made of a greenish wood and set with all manner of unusual implements instead of knives and forks.

All the interior is lit and warmed by magic, making it very pleasant. No amount of magical direction finding or devices used by the characters will help them find their way if they succumb to the *confusion*. You may wish to have a party who persist in getting sidetracked split off from Teh Atht for a short while. If they remain where they are, he will be able to find them quite quickly; but if they wander off it might not be until something nasty has found them first!

It takes Teh Atht 1½ hours (at least) to find what he is looking for: the concealed staircase up to the interesting part of the building — the Tower proper, containing Mylakhrion's study and library. There are over 500 steps up the Tower to the first chamber. This is the first part of the library which occupies 3 floors, each a single room crammed with all manner of magical and sagacious tomes. Teh Atht will momentarily go into delirious raptures until he remembers why they are here, whereupon he will start the search for the spell they seek.

At this point, sensitive characters (POW 14+) may get a shiver down their spine. Is it suddenly colder in here? they ask themselves; and Why do I feel all goose-pimply, like something namelessly horrible is creeping up on us? Teh Atht will be too involved in his search to pay any attention to such nonsense, of course, as he has had to put up with so much from the wimpy characters. He carries on rifling through shelves and making piles of books on the floor.

Fortunately Mylakhrion was an organised chap for a wizard and it does not take Teh Atht too long to find just what he is looking for; or at least it wouldn't if he could concentrate on the matter in hand and not get sidetracked by interesting spells for making perfect soufflels or turning glass into diamonds. If characters assist and watch him, he will actually get on a bit quicker. With a cry of delight, Teh Atht lifts aloft a tome of collected writings on anomalies in Time, put together with annotation by the old wizard. In it there is a reference to a second book, in which Mylakhrion wrote down a spell to put right just such a Time anomaly which an enemy of his had devised to trap him. In a couple of seconds, his keen eyes alight on the libram .... but then he goes pale as death ....

In the doorway appears a bloated, misshaped figure with wrinkled black skin. Only in the vaguest sense could in be called humanoid. Its eyes are deepest black and its fingernails are long and curved. Yep, this is Gorgos, come to take his revenge on Teh Atht, a revenge as hideous as the creature that brings it. A twisted abomination of a grin appears on its lips as the tattered robes of black and yellow it wears are rent asunder to reveal a writhing mass of pincered tentacles which shoot and slither towards everyone present, snapping monstrously. Gorgos' attack is described in full in the Characters section.

All present will suffer an attack from one limb until Teh Atht has avoided being hit for one round. A character can volunteer to try and protect Teh Atht, receiving two attacks. In his free round, Teh Atht casts a spell of protection over the whole party which Gorgos' attacks cannot penetrate. Teh Atht will then have to leave the circle of protection to do battle with Gorgos, and as he does so, he gives the libram to the most magically-experienced character and tells them to get on with it while he distracts the monster without. The circle turns into an opaque sphere when he leaves.

The spell takes half an hour to set up. 40 minutes after Teh Atht leaves, the circle of protection suddenly disappears and the floor shakes as they see a large chunk of wall fly outwards as if blasted by some immense magic force. Vanishing through the hole in the wall are the White Sorceror and his Black Thromb assailant. Outside a snowstorm has sprung up, making it impossible to discern what has happened to these two, who have fallen over 150'. As snow begins to drift into the ancient scriptorium, the characters must decide what to do next.

If they try and venture back down the Tower and back through the building to find Teh Atht, they will almost inevitably get lost. If they carry on with the spell to correct the Time anomaly, they have a 2% chance for each Magic Point expended plus 5% for each point of POW permanently sacrificed. The casting of the spell means a loss of 1D8 SAN for each person involved, with no roll to avoid it. Meanwhile, the Tower has lost its warmth and if the characters just hang around, they will soon freeze, although there are plenty of shelves and even books (sacrilege!) to burn.

If the spell fails, Teh Atht will return and conduct the spell for them after a few hours rest, during which the characters must keep him warm. Any First Aid skills would be appreciated by the Sorceror, who is torn and bloody from his battle with the Thromb. Teh Atht is automatically successful in casting the spell.

M5 : TO SLØTAVDEN

By this time, ancient the characters are assumed to have set out for Norway. They can travel fairly inconspicuously to Newcastle as Theldred Gustau has a motor car, and they have hopefully arranged matters so that they can board the ship. Remember that they will need plenty of currency (kŕone) to take them on to Slø̊tavden, however they have decided to travel there. Fortunately, Gustau knows several Scandinavian languages.

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The rail trip to Snosa will be without occurence unless the characters cause one. You may wish to create a number of situations where the players think that something dreadful is about to happen, but which are really quite innocent. Examples might be an inquisitive local official (railway, road police etc), a suspicious man who seems to be following them, a thief who steals something belonging to the PCs and so on.

At Snosa, the characters will have to book into a hotel and find some transport. The least expensive and most reliable way to travel is by reindeer sledge. The sleigh can hold up to 12 passengers and luggage with a team of 8 reindeer pulling. Alternatively, a motorcoach is available for hire.

Sløtavden is a picturesque and unspoilt Norwegian village. Depending on the time of year, the pine forests may be resplendently green or heavily draped with snow. It has a very cosy inn with sufficient rooms to put up 8 guests; any more will have to share rather cramped quarters. The innkeeper will expect some sort of explanation of their business and may ask the local constabulary to keep an eye on the newcomers if they are strange in their behaviour or untowardly evasive in manner. Several of the villagers can manage some broken English, if the characters have bothered to learn any from Gustau.

Since the location of the Tower can be pinpointed no more accurately than the general vicinity of the village, there is no need for the adventurers to go any further, but if they want to explore the area, there should be no problems. They may well want to keep out and about as part of their cover — perhaps they are naturalists studying reindeer herd movements, or astronomers searching the northern skies for new comets and meteors.

Should anyone try and get in dream-contact with their descendants, they will get absolutely no response, a complete blankness. This may cause them to fear for Teh Atht (quite rightly), however, in a few hours the switch should take place. If anyone (for example, the local police or the innkeeper) is watching, this will cause great alarm, naturally. Theldred or the modern characters, now restored to their proper Time, will have to do some Fast Talking to get away, or simply ignore the locals and get out of Sløtavden as quickly as possible. Locals will probably be unwilling to pursue the matter further, but if the characters cause any damage or injury they might get into more serious trouble, even being met by a number of plain clothes policemen who will want to ask them some awkward questions. Anyone attempting to explain what has truly happened risks being locked up in a lunatic asylum! In fact, Theldred Gustau may have to help any characters who have gone temporarily insane (and who would blame them) in the transposition, since another SAN roll must be made.

There may also be problems for Gustau back in England if the ancient characters left any clues as to their whereabouts when they were committing any crimes. And if they sold any ancient artefacts to pay for the trip, their new owners will find them mysteriously vanished. I dare say that Theldred Gustau will want to write up their exciting adventures....

A7 : LOOSE ENDS

The ancient characters will arrive in the blasted library atop Mylakhrion's Tower. If Teh Atht was the one who completed the spell, all will be well; he will be able to lead them through the building to the temporary camp where the flying items/steeds (or whatever) are, and the characters can accompany him back to Klühn to recuperate. You may like to have them mount a raid on the remains of the Temple of the Secret Gods to recover their equipment, stolen by Gorgos' priests at the start of the adventure.

If the modern characters complete the spell themselves successfully, the ancient characters will find that the magical explosion in the chamber they are transported to has damaged the structure of the Tower and it is beginning to crumble. If they try and escape down the stair, they will find it is blocked with fallen masonry. Suddenly, the Tower starts to sway alarmingly and soon falls, crashing to ground and breaking up as it tumbles. The characters are flung from the Tower and land safely in scattered snowdrifts: perhaps that recent snowstorm wasn't all bad! All the characters have to save vs DEX on 3d6 or lose half their remaining hit points in the fall; then they must save vs CON on 3d6+3 or be stunned for 10d6 minutes. Anyone stunned for more than half an hour will start taking cold damage from the freezing conditions at the rate of 1 point per minute.

The snowstorm itself has stopped, and so characters moving around should be able to see each other and help search for friends. After an hour, Teh Atht comes staggering into view, exhausted from his battle with Gorgos, which he has finally won - he hopes. If the characters are still there, they will see him immediately, and can help him. As soon as Teh Atht is recovered, they will be able to return to his own Tower.

The return journey will be peaceful and without incident, unless you think the players have had it *really* easy!

CHARACTERS

Teh Atht

There are no stats given for this NPC. Teh Atht is simply able to do whatever you as GM require him to do. The characters will not be able to harm him, neither can anything other than Gorgos. However, although he is in this scenario to help the sets of characters, *don't* make him the universal escape clause.

Teh Atht is strongly devoted to Law as opposed to the Chaos represented in this scenario by the Cthulhu Mythos beings (the Thromb and the Beast Outside Time). The scenario notes give guidance on Teh Atht's likely actions and how to play his character — you should treat him as the archetypal White Wizard. He will always use minimum force in any situation and give others the benefit of the doubt. He will also attempt to preserve lives, neutralising threats rather than destroying them.

Gorgos

This guy is nasty, mean and viscious. He's a megalomaniac villain, an alien trying to dominate the entire Earth, who's not too concerned if he pulls down the local space-time continuum in the attempt.

Gorgos is invulnerable to characters, be they Ancient or Modern. This covers eventualities like *wishes* in *AD&D* or attempts to summon something just as nasty to deal with him — this latter event is likely to produce a cataclysm which will inevitably kill all the characters and lead to the destruction of Time as the Beast can no longer find Gorgos. Allow Gorgos any and all magic and spells, and virtually unlimited magic points/potential when in the Temple. This is the source of his energies, and should be treated as the worst possible place the characters could be. For *AD&D* games, Gorgos will be psionic type VI, making him invulnerable to all psionic attacks and disciplines.

In appearance, Gorgos initially appears as a man with very dark skin and golden hooded robes which obscure much of his features. Seeing him thus incurs no SAN loss, but those who meet his eyes can be affected by his presence. In *AD&D* this works like an *awe* attack - see *Legends & Lore*; in *CoC* this would be a POW vs POW roll. The effect is simply to freeze somebody to the spot if the fail their roll.

At the end of the scenario, Gorgos' true Thromb nature is revealed to the Modern characters. Use the following stats for his attacks on the party which they suffer until Teh Atht can erect his magical defences:

Gorgos

STR 30 CON 30 SIZ 20 INT 20 POW 25
DEX 15 Hit Pts 75(total)/20 (per tentacle) Move 6 SAN Loss 1D20/1D3
Attacks - many tentacles each 75% 2D10+2D6
Armour - 5 pt skin, 5pt/round regeneration

Gorgos' attack is described thus: "A black hairy stalk.... stretched itself out.... The end bloated out like some loathsome fungus, forming the spindly-legged likeness of an enormous spider.... Pseudopods sprouted, became hooks of chitin, bony claws and pincers, all lashing toward (them)....

Madame Louise Chalbert

Mme Chalbert is unlikely to enter the scenario in an active capacity, unless the Modern characters are quick off the mark and get to the Chateau before the ceremony begins. She is a charming and elegant hostess who will not deny any connections with the occult, but will explain that she is only interested in "white magic" — mediums, fortune telling, faith healing and so on. If the characters attempt to persuade her to not continue with the ceremony, she will deny all knowledge of it, but secretly arrange for her contacts in the French government to harass them, possibly even arranging an accident.

She speaks perfect French and excellent English and can be disarmingly pleasant. However much the characters suspect her, they will be unable to persuade anyone else of her duplicitous nature. The whole scenario hangs on her *starting* the ceremony, so don't let anything happen to her beforehand! She is quite careful in her activities, and there will always be bodyguards or witnesses to prevent an assassination attempt.

Mme Chalbert

STR 12 CON 15 SIZ 11 INT 18 POW 16
DEX 15 APP 17 EDU 16 SAN nil

Attacks: dagger 40% 1D6 .22 automatic 35% 1D6

Skills: Archaeology 20%, Bargain 25%, Camouflage 50%, Climb 50%, Cthulhu Mythos 28%, Debate 40%, Dodge 35%, Drive Auto 45%, Fast Talk 60%, Hide 25%, History 35%, Listen 40%, Occult 80%, Oratory 20%, Psychology 25%, Read/Write English 60%, Read/Write French, Ride 40%, Sneak 35%, Speak English 75%, Speak French 90%, Spot Hidden 35%.

Magic: 16 MP, *Summon Nightgaunt, Bind Nightgaunt, Create Ghoul, Dread Curse of Azathoth, Shrivelling, Contact Deep Ones, Call Beast Outside Time.*

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THE SORCERER'S (BOOK)

by Brian Lumley

I, Teh Atht of Klühn, having ofttimes conversed with my wizard ancestor, Mylakhrion of Tharamoon (dead these eleven hundred years), now tell the tale of how that mighty mage was usurped by his apprentice, Exior K'mool. At least, history has always supposed that he was usurped.

The story begins some fifty-three years before Mylakhrion's demise, at the fortress city Humquass on Theem'hdra's eastern strand, where that oldest and craftiest of sorcerers was the then resident mage, answerable only to the King himself. Humquass is no more, swept away by tides of time and war and Nature, but the legends live on.

I

Now in that day Humquass was a warrior city and its King, Morgath, was a warrior King; and the walls of the city were high and wide, with great towers where the soldiers were garrisoned; and the King's territories extended to the south, even to the Hrossak border which Morgath would push back if he had his way. For the King hungered for those southern lands and his warrior's heart ached for a kingdom which would enclose not only Hrossa to the River Luhr, but Yhemnis too. And Morgath would send ships across the Straits of Yhem to annex even Shadarabar, the island stronghold of savage black pirates.

As for Mylakhrion: he had served the King for fifteen years, since that time when first he came out of the west and across the mountains into Morgath's fierce kingdom. Aye, and in his way Mylakhrion had been a faithful servant, though truth to tell there were those who wondered who served whom.

For Mylakhrion's palace was greater than the King's — though far less opulent — and where Morgath received common men, Mylakhrion would receive none at all. The mage's familiars gave audience in his stead, speaking with Mylakhrion's voice and in his manner, but any emergence of the sorcerer himself was a singularly rare thing. Indeed, the very sight of Mylakhrion abroad and active in the topmost turrets of his palace tower — no less than the passing of comets across the sky or eclipses of the sun and moon — was almost invariably taken as portent of great wonders ... and sometimes of dooms and disasters. And lesser mages seized upon such sightings, reading strange weirds into the wizard's ways, what little known of them.

One thing which was known for a cetainty was Mylakhrion's great age; not his actual age in years, but the fact that he was far older than any other living man. So thin as to be skeletal — with wrinkles to number against his years upon a skin of veined parchment pale as moonbeams — and with a long, tapering beard almost uniformly white, the wizard was ancient. Grandfathers could remember their grandfathers whispering of sorcerous deeds ascribed to his hand or wand when they themselves were mere children; and it was known for a fact that a previous apprentice of Mylakhrion's, one Azatta Leet, had recently died in Chlangi at an estimated age of one hundred and eleven years!

But in general the sorcerer's astonishing longevity was not much mentioned. People were mindful of his magnitude — and of Morgath's dependence upon him — and it was deemed neither moot nor even wise to probe too deeply into the hows, whys and wherefores of his attainment to so great an age. For all that he was ancient, still the mage's mind was brilliantly clear, his eyes undimmed and his sorceries (benevolent or otherwise) marvellous and utterly unfathomable to adepts of lesser learning. Moreover, he might not take kindly to allegations of vampirism and the like, practised to extend to eternity his existence in the world of men.

And in their thinking and their muted whisperings, the wizard's would-be compeers came close to the truth; for in his long search for immortality Mylakhrion had indeed performed many morbid magicks, though mercifully vampirism was not numbered amongst them. That is not to say he would *not* be a vampire if in that way he might prolong his life or regain his lost youth, but he knew better than that. No, for vampires were far too restricted and their lives in constant danger from attendant perils. Besides which, they were not truly immortal, not as Mylakhrion desired to be. He wanted to live forever, not to be eternally undead — or if not eternally, at least until the stake should find his heart.

On many occasions that master of magick had believed himself close to hitting upon the correct formula for immortality, that at least his feet were set upon the right path, but in the hour of his supposed triumph always he had been frustrated. He had prolonged his life far beyond the normal span, most certainly, but still he had grown old and must eventually die. And in any case, who would wish to live forever in a defunct body?

Now, knowing that his years were narrowing down, his search was more desperate and his disappointments deeper as days passed into years and the solution drew no closer. Now, too, he saw his coming to Humquass as an error; for while Morgath protected him and provided for his purely physical needs his demands upon him grew more and more tiresome and consumed far too much of his time. Of which he might not have a great deal left.

For being a warrior King and going often to war, Morgath was constantly in need of favourable forecasts for his battle plans. Too, he sought for dark omens against his enemies, and he was no less interested in their stars than in his own. What with prognostications and astrological readings, auguries and auspices, personal weirds and bodements in general, Mylakhrion had not the time he required for his own all-important interests and darkling devotions.

Nor could the King's business be kept waiting, for the Hrossaks and Yhemnis had their wizards too, and Mylakhrion was required to turn aside the monstrous maledictions and outrageous runes which these enemy mages were wont to cast against Humquass and its King. Black Yoppaloth of the Yhemnis, a sorcerer of no mean prowess, was particularly pernicious; likewise Loxzor of the Hrossaks; and so it can be seen that Mylakhrion was hard put to attend his many duties, let alone pursue his own ambitions. And perhaps that would explain, too, Mylakhrion's reasons for sticking so close to his apartments. Why, his duties were such as to make virtually a prisoner there!

And yet Mylakhrion had prospered under Morgath and so felt a certain gratitude toward him. Moreover, he liked the King for his intelligence. Aye, for intelligent kings were singularly rare in that day, particularly warrior-kings. And so the sorcerer felt he must not simply desert Morgath and leave him to the mercies of his equally warlike neighbours, and his frustration continued to grow within him.

Until the dawning of a certain idea ...

Now among the city's common wizards — real and assumed — there dwelled one Exior K'mool, a talented apprentice of Phaithor Ull before that mage rendered himself as green dust in an ill-conceived theumaturgical experiment. A seer whose betokenings showed promise despite the fact that as yet they remained undeveloped, essentially Exior was oneiromantic. His dreams were prophetic and generally accurate.

And it came to pass that Exior dreamed a dream in which Mylakhrion took an apprentice to assist him in his sorceries, and Exior himself was the chosen one and rose to great power in Theem'hdra in the service of Morgath, King of Humquass. Upon awakening he remembered the dream and smiled wryly to himself, for he believed his vision had been born of wishful thinking and was in no way a portent of any real or foreseeable future. But then, a day or two later, Mylakhrion made it known that indeed he sought a young assistant ...

Exior's heart soared like a bird when first he heard this news; alas, for a little while only. For how could Exior — a ragged street-magician who sold charms and love potions for a living and divined the futile dreams of his penniless patrons for mere crusts of bread — possibly apply for a position as apprentice to Mylakhrion the Mighty? The idea was preposterous! And so, however reluctantly, he put aside the notion and forced himself to consider his vision as purely coincidental to Mylakhrion's requirement.

And as days passed into weeks so Mylakhrion gave audience to many young men who presented themselves as prospective employes. As usual, the interviews were carried out through his familiars (though many applicants got no farther than Mylakhrion's gate) while the wizard, unseen by those aspirants who were actually allowed to pass into his palace, busied himself with more pressing matters in hidden rooms. In this way, many who might have impressed quite favourably confronted by a merely human interviewer — even by so awe-inspiring a man as Mylakhrion — found themselves completely overwhelmed in the presence of his familiar creatures; for these were three great bats whose faces were those of men!

Indeed, they had once been men, those fearsome familiars: wizards who had formed a sorcerous triad to crush Mylakhrion when he refused to join them. Unfortunately for them, his talents had been greater than all of theirs combined, hence their hybridization. That had been many years ago, however, before ever he came to Humquass, and Mylakhrion had all but forgotten the details of the thing. He trusted his familiars implicitly; and besides, they had only the faces of his old enemies.

Their minds were their own, or Mylakhrion's when he chose to use them as he now used them.

Finally, when even the older, failed magicians of Morgath's lands began to present themselves at Mylakhrion's gate, Exior K'mool dreamed again; and in his dream he saw the man-faced bats nodding to him in unison before bidding him enter Mylakhrion's inner sanctum where that Master of Mages was waiting to hand him his robe of apprenticeship. That was enough.

At dawn of the next day Exior dressed himself in his finest jacket and breeches — the ones with only a few minor repairs — and made his way tortuously through the mazy streets of Humquass to the walls of Mylakhrion's palace. There, at the great gate, he timorously took his place behind three others and waited ... but not for long. A small barred window opened in a door in the gate and each of the other aspirants was cursorily dismissed in his turn. Seeing this, Exior began to turn away, at which point a voice stopped him. It was the voice of the man whose face peered through the barred window, and it said:

"Young man, what is your name?"

"K'mool," said Exior stepping warily forward. "Exior K'mool."

"And do you seek employment with Mylakhrion?"

"I do," he answered, wondering at the echoing and sepulchral quality of the man's voice. "I desire to be ... to be the mage's apprentice."

"You seem uncertain."

"I am certain enough," said Exior, "but I wonder —"

"If you are worthy?"

"Perhaps." He nodded nervously.

"My master likes humility in men," said the face at the window. "Aye, and honesty, too. Enter, Exior K'mool."

The door in the gate opened soundlessly and Exior took a deep breath as he stepped over its sill. He expelled the aire in a loud gasp as the door closed behind him, and glancing about wide-eyed he was almost startled into flight at sight of the things he now saw. But where to flee? Where a moment before the sky had been blue and the sun warm, now, seen from this grey courtyard, the heavens were dark with racing clouds and a chill wind ruffled the fur-covered body of ... of the bat-thing whose man's face had spoken from the window in the gate!

"Do you fear Mylakhrion's familiar, Exior K'mool?" asked the great bat-thing. "Or are you alarmed at the season here, which is ever different to that outside."

"A little of both, sir, I fancy," Exior finally managed.

The bat-thing laughed a loud, baying laugh and flapped aloft. "Fear not," it boomed, hovering in the air, "but follow behind me and you shall see what you shall see."

Exior gritted his teeth, put his fear behind him and strode after the creature across the windswept courtyard to enter into the palace proper: a stark and massive building of huge basaltic blocks with openings like black mouths which seemed to grimace hideously. Following the flap of membranous wings, he mounted corkscrew stairs of stone within a tower whose base must surely be big as the tavern where Exior lodged; and soon, arriving at a landing, he found the freakish familiar waiting for him before an entrance whose arch was carved with all the signs of the zodiac. Now, as the creature hopped across the threshold, he followed into a vast room whose contents held him spellbound in a single instant of time.

Mylakhrion's familiar settled itself upon a high perch, where it hung upside down the better to observe Exior's astonished reactions. After a little while it said: "And are my master's possessions of interest to you, young man?"

"Indeed they are!" the youth gasped, his jaw ajar and his eyes gazing in ghastly fascination all about the room. Why, if the contents of this single room were his, even Exior K'mool could be a mighty magician!

For here were scattered all the appurtenances of Mylakhrion's art, every sort and description of occult apparatus. There were acromegalic skulls of monstrous men and shocking skeletons of things which never had been men; strangely shaped phials and bottles filled with quiescent or bubbling liquids of golden, green or dark hues, all of a usage utterly unknown to Exior; bagpipes made of ebony and ivory and the cured intestinal sacks of dragons, whose music was doubtless used in the propitiation of certain demons; shelf upon shelf of books bound in brown leathers and yellow skins, and at least one whose umber bindings bore — Exior would swear to it — the purplish mottlings of tattoos!

Here too were miniatures spheres of alien worlds and moons, mapped out and inlaid with cryptic runes of gold and silver; and all slowly turning where they hung from the fretted ceiling on ropes of tiny cowries. And here pentacles of power adorning the mosaic walls and floor, glowing with the inner fire of the gem-chips from which they were constructed. And sigil-inscribed scrolls of vellum upon a marble table, together with a silver-framed magnifier, an astrolabe, calipers and tiny bronze weights. And central in the room and resting alone upon a small stand of carved chrysolite, a great ball of clouded crystal.

The workshop of Theem'hdra's greatest wizard, thought Exior — his entire library too — and all in this one room! But as if divining his very thoughts, the perch-hung chiropteran shook its head. "Nay, lad," the creature said, "for this is only one tenth of a tenth part of all my master's mysteries. I am his most trusted familiar, and yet there are rooms here which I have never entered, and other I would not even dare to seek out! Nay, this is merely his room of repose."

"And am I ... am I to see .. *him?*"? Exior asked.

"If you are so fortunate to be chosen as his apprentice, certainly you shall see him. Daily. Perhaps too often! He shall instruct you thus and thus, and you shall do so and so. And if you are quick to learn, one day you may even grow mighty as Mylakhrion himself."

"I meant," said Exior, " am I to see him ... now?"

"That depends ..." the creature answered, and went on: "But now there are things I must ask you, Exior K'mool, and you shall answer truthfully to each and every question."

Exior nodded and Mylakhrion's familiar demon continued: "Good! Then answer me this: why do you seek this position?"

"I would study under the greatest mage in all the land," Exior answered at once. "Also my master would know how best to employ my own minor talents."

"And what are those talents?"

"I scry the future in dreams," said Exior. "Aye, and my dreams have never lied to me."

"Never!" The sephulchral tones of the bat-thing seemed honed with a certain skepticism.

"I have common dreams like any man; but there are special dreams, too, and when they come to me I can usually recognize them."

"And is that all you are, a dreamer?"

The blood began to burn in Exior's face, but he felt less humbled than angry. "I also translate tongues, read runes and fathom cyphers," he snapped. "My seer's eyes scry the meanings of even the most obscure languages, glyphs and cryptograms."

"Is that all?" The creature's voice was cold as deep, dark oceans of ice, drawing all of the heat out of Exior in a moment.

"I ... I mix potent potions, and —"

"Love potions?" The bat-thing seemed almost to sneer.

Exior knew when he was beaten. Furious, he turned on his heel to leave the room, the tower, Mylakhrion's palace, the whole ridiculous idea behind him — and found his way blocked by two more giant chiropters. They did not speak but merely stood as statues in the arched entrance, their men's faces observing through speculative eyes Exior where he paused in confusion.

Finally, from behind the youth, the inverted one spoke again: "He who acts in haste often acts foolishly — and regrets at leisure. How do you answer that?"

Exior turned sharply upon his examiner. "He who accepts insults and taunts from his inferiors is an even bigger fool!" he hotly retorted.

The bat-thing righted itself upon its perch. "And do you consider Mylakhrion's favourite familiar your ... inferior?" Its voice was the merest whisper now — the hiss of a dry leaf blown across a graveyard slab — but its human eyes were bright, hard and unblinking.

"That face you wear," said Exior K'mool, his words coming cracked from a throat suddenly dry as dust, "once sat upon a man's shoulders, Fool I may be, but my life and limbs are my own and I speak with my own voice. In short, I am still a man — and better a foolish man than some hybrid horror spawned of a wizard's —" And there he broke off, for the three were laughing at him, baying dinningly where they faced him, their booming laughter echoing loudly in the great room.

Astonished, and because there seemed little else to do, Exior waited until they were done and the one on the perch once more addressed him. "Mylakhrion," the creature finally informed him with a strange smile, "likes humility and honesty in a man, as I believe I have mentioned aforetime. He also likes a little spunkiness, on occasion — but not too much, for that might be mistaken for audacity. Forwardness and fools he will not suffer, but cowardice he abhors! You have done well, Exior K'mool — and now my master will see you."

And all three familiars nodded as one creature, just as Exior had seen it in his dream.

"Seer, be seated," said Mylakhrion, and the youth at once recognized his voice as being one and the same with that of the bat-thing.

Mylakhrion sat upon his night-black throne and studied Exior minutely, coldly, with no emotion whatever visible in his straight-backed mien. His silver eyebrows were thin and turned sharply upward at the temples, an beneath them his eyes were of that same palest blue as the Outer Immensities glimpsed offtimes by Exior in his dreams. Strange those eyes and almost vacuous, but at the same time filled with a terrible lore and a knowledge forbidden to common men and middling mages alike.

His hands, where they protruded from the bell-like cuffs of his robe and rested upon the arms of his throne, were long and thin and their nails sharply pointed, their colour, as that of his much wrinkled face and sandaled feet, was a pale umber like unto certain parchments. A cold old man, Mylakhrion, and his gaze even colder. He trained that gaze upon Exior as the youth sat down upon a tiny stool close to the somewhat raised dais where sat the sorcerer himself.

The apartment was starkly bare in comparison with that 'room of repose' where from Exior had been guided to this even loftier chamber. It had a balcony with a balustrade of marble gargoyles, opening upon a frightfully vertiginous view (a wintry vista, despite the true season) of some drear and windswept desert where mounds of rubble hinted of extensive ruins. Exior did not recognize the scene, and he was sure that it lay not anywhere in the vicinity of Humquass.

Now there was no king in all Theem'hdra who would normally allow the house of a common man to overshadow his own; but Mylakhrion was distinctly uncommon, and besides, he required a place higher than any other to facilitate his far-seeing, and for the propritiation of elementals of the air; and so Morgath had never voiced complaint. But the plain fact of the matter was that the sorcerer liked to be remote from mundane men; and where better than high in this forbidding and precipitous palace tower, this veritable aerie of a room?

Exior had been brought here by the three familiars, and their spokesman has accompanied him into the room through great brazen doors. Once Exior was safe inside, however, the bat-thing had quickly departed; whereupon Mylakhrion had appeared from the balcony to climb the three small steps of the dais to his throne of polished jet.

Now in that dim and sparsely furnished place, with only the light from the balcony to relieve the gloom — and that a dim and dingy light — Exior K'mool and Mylakhrion the Mighty gazed each upon the other, would-be wizard and Supreme Sorcerer alike. And whatever the thoughts of the youth in the presence of this legended enchanter, they were soon cut short as Mylakhrion commenced his own examination.

"So, young man, and you would be my apprentice, would you? Well, then, there is more I must know about you; what suffices for my familiars may not satisfy me. First let me tell you of the work, and then you must say if you are still interested; after which and depending upon your decision, I may ask you to perform a small task for me. If you perform well — and *only* if the task is completed to my satisfaction — then you shall be my apprentice. That may be to look too far ahead, however, for might not care much for the work."

Mylakhrion paused for long moments and turned his strange eyes to the grey, racing clouds beyond the gargoyle balusters. The sharp nail of his finger tapped for a little while, thoughtfully, upon the hard arm of his throne. Then, without returning his gaze to Exior, finally the wizard said:

"The hours will be long, and when there are not enough of them for any one day I shall make more. Never have nothing to do. And you must put aside fear; I have no room for it. There will be liches here to take horrid advantage of one who is afraid, for I am a necromancer. But as well as the dead, I call up spirits black and white, demons and devils and saints alike. I hold intercourse with ghouls, gaunts and wraiths, with werewolves, gnomes and jinnees; aye, for there is much to be learned from them. And remember: just as idle hands wither, so slothful minds mortify. I converse at length with Demogorgon; from time to time I sleep with succubus and have fathered lamia, harpy, vampire and elf. And all of them — my wives, children and changelings — they occasionally visit me. They call me master, and so shall you, and I am a *hard* taskmaster. Tasks are not allowed to remain unperformed; nothing which may be done today is ever done tomorrow. And for all that I have done, still I am unchanged. Aged, yes, but a man still — and mortal! And I seek immortality, Exior K'mool, which is why you are here: to lessen the burden and save time for me. For once time is fled, who may recall it? And again I say to you, remember: stitches in time save myriads! You will assist me not alone in many small tasks — be my messenger, pot watcher, my sweeper, linguist, my rune-reader, seer — but in great works and experiments also. And of all my knowledge shall you partake, learning and growing wise in the ways of magick. BUT —" (and abruptly the wizard paused, leaving Exior breathless as if he himself had spoken all of these words) "a warning! Never *never* seek to subvert my cause, change my course or deliberately and maliciously do anything to cause me discomfort, neither of mind nor of body! And if you are a good apprentice, then, when I am no more —" And again he paused.

In a little while, as Exior sat and fought to still his trembling, Mylakhrion turned his eyes back to the youth. "And are you still interested?"

Unable to find words, Exior merely nodded.

II

As night drew on and the sun sank down behind the mountains, Exior smelled a great storm blowing up and hurriedly sought shelter. He tethered his yak just within the mouth of a small cave hidden in the lee of wind-carved crags, then carefully checked to ensure that this was not the lair of some wild beast. Grumbling as he worked and occasionally cursing, he lighted a fire in a hollow place and brewed himself a pot of tea.

Six months ago he has looked back from his tail-end position in an escorted caravan leaving Humquass and smiled as he watched the walls of the city slowly merging into the southern horizon; since when he had not smiled a great deal, had faced dangers galore and covered thousands of miles in the performance of Mylakhrion's "small task" — which still remained unperformed. Now Exior had reached the end of his abiltiy to endure any more hardship, the end of his tether, and he ought also to have reached the end of his journey. But …

"Go west," Mylakhrion had instructed him. "Cross the Eastern Peaks, pass between the Nameless Desert and the Mountains of Lohmi, follow the sun over wide and rolling plains to the foothills of the Great Circle Mountains, and there turn your feet northward. Keeping the foothills on your left hand, follow the edge of the plain and in the space of two days you will find a city lost in the desert sands.

"At the edge of city's ruins lying closest to the foothills, there you will spy the broken fang of a once great tower, and in its base a door. Now listen carefully, Exior K'mool, for this is most important. Deep beneath the tumbled tower, hidden in a catacomb of caves, there within a secret chamber you will find a Great Book. It is locked and lies upon a pedestal of onyx. Bring me that book, Exior K'mool, and thereafter be known as Mylakhrion's apprentice!

"But know too, young man, that the dangers will be many and the way long and hard … Now, how do you say?"

Once more, like a fool, Exior had agreed; and shortly thereafter he joined a caravan heading north. After eight days he left the caravan and struck out over the eastern range, crossing in a week. Another month took him to the Nameless Desert, and another saw him in the long grasses of the central plains. There his horse was bitten by an adder and he was obliged to proceed on foot. Two more months and autumn was drawing to a close and now along with winter the Great Circle Mountains loomed, in whose foothills Exior met with friendly nomads and bought from them his yak. Five more weeks took him to the borders of the Desert of Ell, and for three days now he had been wandering northwest between desert and foothills.

By now he should have sighted Mylakhrion's lost city, but so far it remained lost. Lost, too, Exior K'mool, if he continued for very much longer with his quest. His water was low, food down to crusts; there was little or no grass for his beast — which in any case was old and tired — and worst of all the days were growing shorter and the skies darker with the rapid approach of winter. Indeed, before finding his refuge for the night, Exior had recognized the bleak and wintry landscape as that seen from Mylakhrion's tower room, and the clouds which fled ever south were those same clouds he had thought peculiar to the sky over the sorcerer's palace. Obviously Mylakhrion had spied out the way for him; why, then, had he failed to find the lost city?

That night, dreaming, the youth saw a great fang of stone rising from drifted sand and tumbled blocks. His dream was recurrent, but each time his slumbering spirit approached the visioned pile so the howling gale would startle him to wakefulness in his blanket, that or the cry of his frightened beast wher it stood trembling in the lightning-illumined door of the cave. Mercifully the storm's direction was away from Exior's refuge, for its fury was such that it moved a vast amount of sand and both man and beast might easily have been entombed.

As it was, rising cold, tired and hungry from his troubled and fitful slumbers, Exior saw that the storm had blown itself out; also that he had been presumptuous to doubt those directions given him by Mylakhrion. For now, where great waves of sand had stretched to the horizon, the scattered remnants of a once mighty city lay uncovered to his bleary gaze. And not far off, within a stone's throw, a certain shattered spire drew his eyes as a northstone draws a nail. Without doubt this was that tower of which Mylakhrion had foretold, beneath which Exior would find the maze of caves and eventually the secret chamber and volume of ancient magick!

The youth fed himself and his beast as best he could, drank a little from his leather bottle and dampened the yak's nose and mouth, then walked the animal beneath wintry morning skies to the base of the crumbling but still massive monument. Alas, in the sand drifted against its base he could find no door; but above, almost within reach, fallen blocks revealed a dark hole somewhat wider than his shoulders.

Now before proceeding any farther, Exior made a pause and gave some thought to one other thing Mylakhrion had told him. There might well be a 'guard', the ancient magician had warned, a spirit or demon set to watch over the secret room and its book; for the book contained such powerful magick that whosoever possessed it could make himself mighty above all men. It had belonged to a great sorcerer and necromancer, that book, but in a war of wizardry he had been obliged to flee the city in the desert and the book had been left behind. Even as he fled, the city was brought to a great ruin by his enemies, and thus it had remained to this day.

That had all been more than five hundred years ago, however, and only recently through his own thaumaturgies, had Mylakhrion discovered again the lost city and fathomed its ancient secrets. And by now the 'guard', if indeed such existed, must be much diminished through time and disuse; and surely Exior should have no trouble with a magick grown so small and centuries-shrivelled...

Well, perhaps not; but nevertheless Exior frowned worriedly as he made torches, piled stones and finally climbed until he could squeeze in through the hole in the wall of the tower. Cobwebby gloom met his eyes, and dusty, spiralling steps that wound down into darkness. He took one last look out through the hole at the drear landscape of tumbled blocks and fallen, shattered pillars — a landscape which now seemed much more friendly than the gloomy bowels of this ages-old tower — lighted a torch and commenced his descent.

Round and down he went, brushing aside or burning cobwebs out of his way; and tiny scurrying things moved aside for him, and dust trickled from ledges where the centuries had piled it; and only the gloom and the winding steps descending ever deeper into bowels of fetid earth... After what seemed an inordinately long time, Exior reached the bottom and found himself in a great cavern whose walls were honeycombed with tunnels and caves.

On guard against whatever might be lurking down here, he was making to explore the largest of these passages when a great rumbling roar froze him in his tracks. A belch of animal fury, the warning had issued from that very tunnel he had been on the point of entering. Trembling in every limb, Exior lighted a second torch and stuck it in the sandy floor, then drew his sword and waited for whatever it was that prowled these eerie excavations: doubless that 'guard' of which Mylakhrion had forewarned.

In a little while the demon appeared and jerked forward on spindly legs into the central hall. Half-spider, half-bat that being, and twice as big as a man to boot. With curving fangs like white scythes, and eyes big as saucers, the thing loomed over Exior and glared down at him; and finally, with a voice that rumbled volcanically and brimstone breath, it spoke:

"What do ye here, little man? This is a forbidden place. Begone!"

Exior shook his head in dumb defiance and held out his torch and sword before him. And finding his voice, he said: "I run an errand for my master, and you shall not stop me."

"And what is the nature of your errand?" questioned the demon.

"To find a room and a runebook," said Exior with many a gulp. "Also, to take that book back to my master."

"I know room and book both!" the creature answered. "Aye, and guard them well. Wherefore it is plainly my duty to eat ye... or would ye care to play a game with me?"

"A game?" replied Exior, who vastly preferred any alternative to being eaten.

"Ye shall have a choice," the demon explained. "Go now and I shall do ye no harm, but if ye stay ye must play my game. If ye win the game ye may take the book and I at last may rest — but if ye lose..."

"Then?" Exior prompted, his heart in his mouth.

"Why, then I shall eat ye!" answered the monster with a great coughing laugh.

"And what is the nature of this game?" asked Exior, wondering where best to strike the beast to bring him down and whether he had the strength for such a stroke.

"I shall say ye a riddle", the demon replied, "and ye must tell me its meaning."

Now Exior's mind grew alert as he readied it for the trial; for there never had been a riddle or rune whose meaning eluded him for long, and despite his great fear he could not refuse the demon's challenge. "So be it", he said, "let's hear your riddle".

"TI DNAMMOC I... MOOR TERCES EHT OT EM DAEL DNA, ERA YLLAER UOY SA UOY EES EM TEL WON, EMAG EHT NOW GNIVAH... EM MRAH TON YAM DNA NOISULLI ERA UOY... SESSENKAEW RUOY DNA, NOM-ED UOY WONK I!"

To which Exior at once and excitedly replied, "My answer is: *'I know you demon, and your weaknesses. You are illusion and may not harm me. Having won the game, now let me see you as your really are, and lead me to the secret room. I command it!'*"

The demon gave a great cry (of relief, Exior suspected) and immediately shrank down into the shape of a tiny lizard which wriggled away into the mouth of one of the tunnels. It paused to look back, whereupon Exior lighted a third torch and followed on behind. In a little while the lizard led the way to a door of brass and squeezed beneath it. When Exior shoved the door open on squeaking hinges, the tiny creature had disappeared.

The room was circular, domed and starkly bare; except for its pedestal of onyx and the Great Book which lay upon it, thick with the dust of five long centuries and more. Quickly Exior crossed to the pedestal and laid his trembling hands upon the great, jewel-crusted cover. He blew away the dust and gazed awestruck at old leather inlaid with ivory, jade, gold and fabulous gems; and at the hasps and lock, green with age and neglect; and last but not least at the weirdly-wrought key where it lay beside the priceless volume.

And he remembered what Mylzkhrion had told him: that in this book were writ the secrets of suns and moons, times past and times as yet unborn, and all the wonders of wizards dead and gone and the lore of darkling dimensions beyond the familiar theree. Knowledge enough to make a man mighty above all other men. And Exior picked up the key and turned it protestingly in the ancient lock.

Then, as he began to lift the heavy cover —

Runes graven in the onyx pedestal caught his eye, and he let the cover fall back upon pages unseen. The glyphs were rare, obscure as the ages, and writ in a cypher to bedazzle the mind of any but a master cryptographer born. Such as Exior K'mool.

Brows drawn together in concentration, lips moving silently as they traced strange words, by the light of his fitful torch he read the runes. Then, lighting yet another torch the better to see, he read them again — and snatched back his hand from where it rested upon the sorcerer's book. For the message was very clear: that without a certain protection the essence of any man brash or foolish enough to read the book would be torn from him, leaving him empty and foolish and bereft of mind, will and soul!

The protection, however, was comparatively simple: it was a moon-rune, rare but well enough known to Exior, designed to propitiate the protective power of Mnomquah, God of the Moon and of Madness, known commonly as Gleeth. And now the youth knew that indeed the book's secrets were marvellous and monstrous, for Gleeth is a god who from his celestial seat sees and therefore knows all; and his moon-runes are correspondingly powerful.

Without hestitation Exior said the rune out loud, and when the echoes of his voice had died away he opened the forbidden volume to the first page. There, in rubric pigments which yet glowed despite the inexorable trickle of time's sands, the warning was repeated: that Gleeth's protection be sought before reading. Since he had already availed himself of the necessary precaution, Exior turned the next page, which bore no signature but commenced straightway with words of baleful might, and with bated breath he began to read...

For long and long Exior read the book, and when his torches were finished he carried it up to the light, and for two days he read on and for two nights he sat and considered and did not sleep. He gave the patient yak his last crust, the last of his water, and on the morning of the third day closed the book and locked it. Then he stood up beside the ruined tower and looked all about at the dreary desert and the sand-sundered city.

His eyes were pale now and chill, with shadows beneath, which were dark above the parchment of his cheeks. And his hair, no longer jet but grey; and his entire mien that of an old man heavy burdened with wisdom and knowledge and sin, while yet his back was straight and his limbs young.

For an hour he stood thus, then turned to his yak. Alas, the poor beast lay dead and a vulture picked at its eye, which was torn by the bird's beak. Angered, Exior said a word — a single *word* — and the vulture give a startled cry and sprang aloft, falling lifeless in the next instant. And the yak shook its head, got to its feet and gazed upon its master. It gazed with one dim old yak's eye, and one which was sharp and bright and that of a vulture.

Then Exior tied the book to his saddle and mounted himself upon his beast's back, and so he left the Desert of Ell and made for home...

III

Three months and three weeks later, a stranger in a cowled cloak and riding upon a blinkered yak arrived at the gates of Humquass beneath its beetling walls. Without any of the usual formalities (for which gross inefficiency he must later make blustered and only half-believed excuses) the Commander of the Guard raised the gate and let the stranger in; and Exior — for such it was, as well you know — went straight to the palace of Mylakhrion.

There the gate in the wall opened at his approach and he passed through without hindrance, tethering his beast in the wizard's courtyard. And where beyond the city's walls all was early spring and the trees budding and flowers burgeoning into bloom, here a midsummer sun blazed down and the heat was stifling where lizards lazed atop white walled gardens of gardenias.

Exior paused not before this wonder nor even considered it, but entered the main tower where waited Mylakhrion's familiars. They gazed upon him, and he upon them; and then they bowed down low before him and let him pass. And so he mounted the stone-hewn stairs to seek out Mylakhrion in his lofty lair.

On this occasion, however, he had no need of ascending to so great a height, for Mylakhrion pottered in his room of repose. There Exior found him, and there the mage gave him greeting of a sort.

"Ho, Exior K'mool! So, you are returned to me at last, and just as I began to suspect that some ill had befallen you. And do you bring me the fruits of your quest?"

Exior said nothing but merely stared at the master mage, observing him curiously and with mixed emotions through his changed eyes. He threw back his cowl to show locks grey as Arctic oceans above a face almost pale as that of Mylakhrion himself. Then he approached a table and brushed its surface free from clutter, placing his linen-wrapped parcel centrally and untying its fastenings. And laying back the coverings he displayed the Great Book, and as Mylakhrion drew nigh he gave him the key.

Now the sorcerer's silver eyebrows rose a little; and without questioning Exior's silence or his strangely altered appearance, he took the key, opened the book and tuned back its jewel-crusted cover. Then —

Mylakhrion frowned and briefly risen eyebrows fell down low again over suddenly narrowed eyes. He turned his gaze to Exior and gloomed upon him, saying: "Youth, the first page is torn out! Do you see the broken edge, the riven vellum?"

And now, in a voice fully frosty as that of his master, Exior answered, "Aye, I have noted it."

"Hmph!" The enchanter seemed disgruntled and a little disappointed, but in another moment his curiosity returned. "So be it", he said, "for what is one leaf on the tree of all dark knowledge."

Now during his journey home Exior had made a diabolic decision. As can be seen, he had determined to be done with Mylakhrion and so had torn out from the book the opening admonition. He reasoned thus: that having read the book he now had power to become mighty above all men, even above Mylakhrion himself. There would be no room for two such sourcerers in Humquass, wherefore the greybeard must go. And what better instrument of an abrupt assassination than this fearful, ruin-recovered volume of morbid magicks?

Unsuspecting and unprotected, Mylakhrion would read, and the book would bind him in its spell, crush him, destroy him utterly. For if the power of the thing were such as to seize upon Exior's spirit, sap the colour from his hair and flesh and sear his very sould — and him *protected!* — how then would the venerable Mylakhrion fare, all frail with age and weighted down with the burden of his unguessed years?

Well, he had lived long enough, and his release would be a kindness of a sort. And anyway, the awakened Exior would make a poor apprentice, who possessed power at least the equal of his supposed master. So let Mylakhrion read and bid him farewell, and then announce to the city the presence of a new and still more powerful mage in the palace of the sorecerer.

Thus had Exior plotted and now he stood upon the threshold of his destiny; and the book was open and Mylakhrion sat before it at the table; and as that self-confessed necromancer began to read out loud, so Exior shuddered as were he dead and felt the furtive treads of ghouls on the soft earth above. An icy fist seemed closed around his heart and a question burned in his brain. How then was he brought to this? A murderer most foul, Exior K'Mool who once was a dreamer and mixed love potions for pennies? Even as Mylakhrion's voice made its sepulchral booming and rolled the work's rare words, so Exior gave a little cry and started forward; at which the sorcerer looked up.

"Is aught amiss, Exior?" There seemed a certain slyness in his question. "Do you fear to hear these marvels and monstrosities? Shall I read them to myself then, in silence?"

Exior shook his head. Was he afraid? Nay, for he had said again Gleeth's moonrune and feared not. Not for himself. "Read on master," he answered; but there was a catch in his voice which he had believed extinct.

Mylakhrion nodded. "So be it," he said, his voice fallen to the merest whisper. For a little while, in silence, the two gazed into each other's eyes; and those of the elder were narrowed now and very bright. Finally they fell once more to the written page.

And so that master of mages read on until he reached the bottom of a certain leaf, and as his fingers went to turn the page Exior once more gave a start. He knew the revelations overleaf were such as must surely sear any mere mortal, which Mylakhrion was of his own admittance. And again that fist tightened upon Exior's heart as he knew himself for a traitor.

"Stop!" he cried as the page began to turn. "Look no more, Mylakhrion! If you would save your sight, your mind, your very soul, *be still!*... For I have deceived you —"

Slowly Mylakhrion looked up and smiled. Even Mylakhrion, he smiled! And it was a real smile, banishing much of his cutomary coldness as the morning sun lifts rime from spring flowers. Exior saw that smile but did not understand; and Mylkakhrion asked, "Do you fear for me, Exior K'mool, or for yourself? For your conscience, perhaps?"

"For both of us, if you will", answered the other harshly. "Whichever way you would have it — only read no more. There is a protection, lacking which the book's blasphemies will blast you! The warning was writ on the first page, which I tore out..."

"Oh?" Mylakhrion's smile diminished somewhat. Deliberately he turned the page, and when Exior made to snatch the book from he he held up a hand of caution. "Peace, young man. Watch — and learn!" And without futher pause he read the page to its end.

During the reading Exior saw shadows gather in the room as with the approach of night. There commenced a strange tremor and a muted thunder which had their sources in the air of the room itself. Crystals splintered and phials flew into fragments; finely wrought mirrors shivered into shards and liquids boiled up and overflowed their crucibles; aye, and cracks appeared in the very walls while dust and debris rained down from the ceiling, ere Mylakhrion was done. Then he closed the book and looked up, and still he smiled. Nor was his mien changed at all, and the reading had done him no ill whatever.

"I...I —"

"Be silent and listen", Mylakhrion commanded. "You have done well, Exior K'mool, as I suspected you would. And you will make a fitting mage for Morgath, given time. As for me: now I up and get me gone to Tharamoon. And on that bleak and northern isle I shall build me a tower, as in my wont, and there seek that immortality which ever confounds me. This palace here in Humquass: it is yours. You have earned it, every last stone."

"I have earned it?" Exior was amazed. "But I am a traitor, and —"

"You were *almost* a traitor," Mylakhrion answered, "and that is the difference. You could not know that I am ever protected against dark forces, and that the book would not harm me. Therefore, when you would have stopped me from reading, you showed mercy. I like that quality in a man, Exior K'mool! And you have many qualities. Some humility, a deal of honesty, a little daring — and now, too, wisdom and mercy! All to the good young man, for without them you could never suceed.

"Moreover, your talents are of the sort Morgath needs above all others. Myself, I was never much of a one for such minor magicks and studied them not extensively. But you? You are a seer and read runes and portents. You reckon well the auspices and faithfully foretell the future. Aye, and the King will be well pleased with you."

Mylakhrion stook up and took hold of Exior's shoulders. "Tomorrow you meet him, Morgath the King, and the day after that I leave for Tharamoon. How do you say to that?"

"But —" Exior began. And again "How... why —"

"Enough!" Mylakhrion lifted his hand. "It is finished."

"But all of this, and Exior gazed all about, "mine? I cannot believe it! Will you take nothing with your?"

Mylakhrion shook his head. "All yours — except I shall take my wand with me, and my familiars three. And the book..."

"The book, of course!" Exior nodded. "And with it make yourself mighty above all men. Yes, naturally."

"No," Mylakhrion smiled again, "for I am that already. I will tell you why I take these things. My wand because it suits my hand, and my familiars because I am grown used to them. Their faces remind me of my youth, when I defeated them in a wizardly war. As for what I leave behind: these things were never really mine. They were gifted to me, or I purchased them, or won them by use of my magick. They are as nothing. But the book — that is mine." His eyes gazed searchingly into the other's face.

And now Exior gasped and his own changeling eyes went wide.

"Ah! I see the truth dawns on you at last," said Mylakhrion. "Your face grows gaunt with a great wonder and your jaw falls open. Rightly so —" and he nodded. "You are of course correct, Exior K'mool, and now you know all. The rune book is an old friend of mine and I would never leave without it. Not unless my leaving was enforced, as happened to me once long ago in the Desert of Ell...

"No, the book goes with me. For who can say when I shall have the time to write another?"

THE ALL NEW COMPUTER HORROR REAL ACTION SHOW

BY ROBERT LYN DAVIES

Welcome, Gamemaster, to White Dwarf's absolutely brilliant Paranoia adventure. Amongst the microscopic type crammed into the next six pages you will find many things to thrill you, including lots of spiffy random tables for rolling on, some absolutely unbelievable enemies to drive PCs up the wall, and of course lots of jokes about roleplaying games! Won't this be fun? Needless to say, any Troubleshooter reading this far should report immediately to their nearest Termination centre and have a nice day.

Alright, you say, what's the scam? Well button your lip, bub, and I'll tell you a story... You know what High Programmers are like, don't you? Always fiddling about with their knobs and peeking and poking things. Recently, an irresponsible high programmer brought some old files to the attention of the beloved Computer. The dusty old tapes gave some skimpy accounts of an Old Reckoning entertainments centre, known as ILM Sector to those few people who hadn't forgotten it long ago. The Computer has now remembered it again, and has noticed a distinct rise in electrical activity in the past few days. Rattling through logic circuits several million times as powerful as the human brain it has reached the only possible explanation for this - the Commies are hiding there! The Computer commands that a team of responsible Troubleshooters investigate the area and check whether the area is indeed infested with the little red fiends. The Computer would also like a map of this place, and of course there may well be some of that good old OR technology lying about, which the High Programmers would just love to get their hands on.

All well and good, you say. It's obviously one of those adventures where the Troubleshooters go off into the wild lands and participate in all sorts of wacky Old Reckoning encounters. And of course you'd be wrong. You see, ILM Sector was once part of the Fantasia Complex, *the* world centre for action amusements and live action roleplaying (see, we said there'd be plenty of gaming jokes). For nearly two hundred years Fantasia has lain dormant, but just under a week ago a group known as the New World Explorers entered the complex and managed to activate its long-dead systems. Unfortunately they had no idea what they were doing, and in fact restarted the Fantasia central entertainments computer just in time to participate in the running of a scenario called *Deadlyville - Town Of Undeath*. You may now snigger to yourself at all the amusing possibilities for violent death this name conjures up for a few seconds...

MISSION ALERT

: ATTENTION TROUBLESHOOTERS! ONCE AGAIN YOUR LOYALTY TO THE COMPUTER HAS BROUGHT YOU THE HONOUR OF BEING SELECTED FOR A MISSION OF GREAT IMPORTANCE!

: YOU WILL ENTER ILM SECTOR. YOU WILL GATHER INFORMATION FOR THE COMPUTER. YOU WILL RETURN WITH VALUABLE OLD RECKONING TECHNOLOGY. PLEASE REPORT IMMEDIATELY TO THE TROUBLESHOOTER BRIEFING CHAMBER IN GWN SECTOR FOR YOUR BRIEFING. THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION.

Give this to your players. Watch them get very excited at the prospect of all the fun they are about to have. Then give them their individual mission objectives. Six of these are presented below, with additional details to allow you to fine tune them to existing characters from your own campaign (campaign? you run a *campaign?*).

MISSION OBJECTIVES

1. If you have two PCs in the same secret society: Inform one of them that his opposite number is suspected of passing information to a rival secret society. It is suggested that the traitor be terminated as soon as possible. (Of course, you could tell *both* players this, and maybe others will be taken out in the crossfire, which could be fun).

2. If a PC is a member of the Romantics, Pro-Tech or a spy for another Alpha Complex then: Inform the player that the secret society sources have heard a rumour that ILM Sector is a treasure trove of Old Reckoning Technology. Bring back as much as you can and you'll go far!

3. If there is a member of Internal Security present: Tell the player that his superiors suspect the team to be infiltrated by a Commie spy! Of course, the uncovering and enthusiastic execution of a traitor or three will lead to a commendation.

4. Any members of PURGE, Frankenstein Destroyers or the Humanists can be told that ILM Sector is rumoured to hold surveillance equipment that could be useful to the computer. Under no circumstances should such vile machinery be allowed to enter Alpha Complex intact.

5. Warn one of the PCs (anyone will do but a good GM will pick the most paranoid) that both the Team Leader and his second in command are suspected Commies, Muties *and* traitors. Any orders they give aren't worth zip, and should be treated with the utmost distrust.

6. Any Armed Forces member can be informed that Internal Security is hoping that this mission will fail. This'll then be used as propoganda by Internal Security when approaching the Computer for additional resources. This player must uphold the reputation of the Armed Forces at all cost.

Alright, referee, that's the secret part out of the way; now do your stuff!

THE BRIEFING

By now you should have chosen one of the PCs as Team Leader (alright, do it now then, and don't forget to adjust his security clearance accordingly while you're about it). The PCs can then come together at the briefing, where they are joined by four other people.

Chriss-I: A well dressed CPU service group beaureaucrat assigned the onerous task of getting a load of loud-mouthed Troubleshooters into ILM Sector and back. As you may have guessed, Chriss-I hates Troubleshooters for all he is worth!

Gerry-G: A rather scruffy member of PLC, his task here is to impress upon the PCs that the Computer is being very generous with equipment for this mission. He goes on to say that as such kit is in short supply they *really should be careful with it, please.*

Louis-G: The R&D representative; he says very little, except that the team should expect the unexpected, that there is nothing to fear except fear itself, and that a stitch in time saves execution. Oh, and that R&D have got some really interesting equipment for you guys, which he'll show 'em in a minute.

Saul-G: He won't say much, but as a member of Power Services he won't get the chance to. Oh, but the PCs will find some *really exciting and interesting* power sources at ILM Sector. Honestly.

Once everyone has said their party-piece, Louis-G suddenly and quite inexcusably accuses Power Services of trying to get access to Old Reckoning Technology before R&D, and a short but heated argument ensues, during which the team is forgotten. Anyone interrupting will be fried by one or the other of them. (Calling clone 2! Calling clone 2!)

When the debate finishes, and all bodies have been cleared away, Chriss-I reads the mission alert to the Troubleshooters, and then starts a rather long speech praising the Computer's choice of the team. Suddenly though, he gets tough, asking the PCs questions about the alert and reminding them that screw-ups are a treasonable offence. Finally, and with a glint in his eye that the PCs won't notice, he implores them to *please be careful.*

Once Chriss-I has finished, the other service group representatives ask for questions from the Troubleshooters. Of course, the team will have plenty to ask, won't they? Not that they'll get a straight answer out of this motley lot, of course. In fact, it might be a good idea to have the Computer end the briefing itself. After all, you don't want to spend precious vapourising time answering silly questions, do you? (You see, the Computer can be *your* friend as well!)

Once the silence has got too embarrassing to bear, Gerry-G takes the Troubleshooters to PLC where they are issued with equipment for the mission ahead, under the bounteous generosity of the Computer.

EQUIPPING THE TEAM

Gerry-G takes charge of the outfitting personally (he doesn't want these schmucks running around in his nice labs unless he can see

'em!); this, of course, means it won't go smoothly. The PLC personnel look down their noses at Troubleshooters, and Gerry-G has this tendency to forget what he is talking about halfway through a sentence, so it can be guaranteed that a chaotic kitting out will result.

Eventually, though, each character will receive the following: *spare barrel for each of their laser pistols, a slugthrower with 20 rounds of solid slugs and 10 rounds of HE ammo, 5 grenades, a laser rifle, a sleeping bag, 2 days compact rations and a canteen.* The Computer, bless it, has also authorised Gerry-G to distribute the following items amongst the team: *flamethrower, 1 ice gun, a multicorder model 1 with 2 programs* (players' choice), *a pocket assay, a radiation detector, 2 5-man tents, 60 metres of rope and a 10-litre water bottle.* To carry all this, the team has also been assigned a *model 816 Flybot* with standard armaments (aren't you going to have a lot of fun with that, eh?).

The PCs may buy extra equipment with any spare credits they have, but Gerry-G will feel very offended if this happens. The Computer has already provided them with all they need, so buying more is doubting the Computer - and that's Treason!

R&D

As always, R&D have some of those new toys that make refereeing ***Paranoia*** such fun. After kitting out the Troubleshooters, Gerry-G sends them next door where the usual array of oddballs and jerks await them. The gadgets on offer include the following:

Multisensor Mission Recorder: GWN-R&D-76-17 A totally reliable audio-visual recorder, comes fitted in a handy helmet. Whatever the wearer sees, hears or says is recorded for posterity. Of course, you'd have to be a complete fool to wear this, because as soon as the adventure ends the Treason points will mount up like nobody's business!

Personal Force Shield: GWN-R&D-11-00 A small hand-held unit that creates a metre-wide force field in front of the character. The shield produced should be treated as being an equivalent of Kevlar armour with mylar coating. It malfunctions 50% of the time, with results that are left entirely to your discretion (heh! heh! heh!).

Flight Pack: GWN-R&D-19-66 The archetypal jet pack, giving 1 man easy-to-control sustained flight. It malfunctions at your discretion; if it does, it results in the jets going on to full power and flying as high up into the air as its fuel (or a roof) allows before cutting out and doing falling rock impressions!

Magnetic Induction Hand Cannon (MIHC): GWN-R&D-27-30 A handy new weapon this, the MIHC consists of a lightweight power unit (usually a back-pack) and the pistol-like weapon. It works using a linear accelerator in the weapon's barrel to silently fire a metal bolt at very high speed. On impact the bolt has the effect of an AP round. The MIHC has a 25% chance of malfunctioning every time it is fired; should this happen, it suddenly starts firing 2 bolts a round until the 10 round magazine is empty. This also causes a massive recoil; the user must make a difficult strength roll to avoid dropping the weapon (which will, of course, cause the weapon to fire in random directions). Told you this one was handy, didn't we? The MIHC is supplied with 10 magazines, and has a range of 50m.

You should remember that only the meanest, skimpiest information is given about these items. Don't tell the turkeys what these things really do - let 'em enjoy the thrill of discovering for themselves!

A PEACEFUL FLIGHT TO ILM

The Troubleshooters can now load up their flybot, and set off for ILM Sector. The bot's brain has been fed the location of ILM Sector, but the team leader will still have to give it some flight instructions (or more likely order some poor sap to do it for him). If the PCs are unfamiliar with flybot operation you can have endless minutes of fun, as suggested in the GM's Book. However, please try and be careful not to wipe out the entire party just yet. This would give your game a rather 'short' feel to it, which means you'll have to find another scenario to fill the next three hours. Stick to scaring them and save the really violent stuff for later, ok?

The flight to ILM Sector takes about an hour, with the flybot making its first approach to the complex at around 1700 hours. This gives the Troubleshooters about three hours before darkness falls. We suggest you get them inside as soon as possible, to avoid having to make up your own encounters for a night spent under canvas. Any night spent in a tiny tent out in the open will be fraught with murder, tension and general paranoia, and is to be avoided. Though now we come to think of it...

ILM FROM THE AIR

ILM Sector is ***BIG***, probably the biggest single structure the Troubleshooters have ever seen, apart from Alpha Complex of course. From the air it looks like a single lozenge-shaped dome rising about 100 metres above the ground and covering an area of several square kilometres. The ground around it is flat - unnaturally so, perhaps - with signs of Old Reckoning roads crossing it, but overgrown with some strange icky green stuff (grass always looks icky to Alpha Complexers). There are a great many cavernous entrances to the Sector ringing the ground level of the structure, mostly surrounded by peculiar Old Reckoning writing, now much-faded and illegible.

Several helicopter pads are suspended about three quarters of the way up the walls; the flybot can land on one of these (though perhaps not without a problem or two, depending on whether the team has suffered enough on the flight to the sector!). The locations of the important entrances to ILM Sector are shown in *Figure 1*; please note that these are shown slightly out of scale (partly to make them clearer but mostly because our map artist is permanently drunk).

Extra-Special Highly Important Note: You are just about to let your players loose in ILM Sector. Never forget it is a very, very spooky place, being large, empty, silent and menacing. Turn on the tension; make 'em shake! Also bear in mind that nothing in this building is familiar to the PCs - describe everything in terms of an Alpha Complex feature.

MAKING AN ENTRANCE

As we've said, there are two types of entrances to ILM Sector - helipads and ground level entrances. Read on and we'll tell you all about them.

HELIPADS: There are ten of these, each identical, and each arranged around the outer wall at a height of 65 metres. *Figure 2* shows a cutaway through a typical helipad terminal. It is simply large and cave-like (complete with stalactites!), dotted with rotting seats. A glass screen protects this grotto from the noise and blast of a landing helicopter. The large doors (1) are invariably locked. Steps lead down to cunningly-disguised items called elevators (2), which the team may have some trouble finding.

Note: The use of firearms to break through such doors will lead to the activation of ancient security and sprinkler systems, resulting in a deluge that will cheerfully soak all the Troubleshooters. A powerful foam spray will also be fired at the flybot; any PC unfortunate to be hit by the spray (your choice) will have to make a very difficult check against strength or be knocked off the landing pad (wheeeeee splat!).

After such diversions, the PCs can settle down to working out how the elevators work (check against engineering or technical services skill). When the elevator arrives, though, it will contain a securibot if they set off the sprinklers or if the elevator arrived after a failed skill roll; if not, why not stick one in anyway? Each elevator can hold six people or people-sized things, and will take its passengers straight down to ground level.

Securibot: Fantasia securibots are roughly man-sized cylinders which walk about on stumpy legs. They are equipped with a pair of powerful arms that are typically used to carry troublemakers away to 'The Cooler' (see later). All weaponry is mounted around the bot's waist, and include 2 stun guns and 2 tanglers, each with a 50% chance of hitting. (It may fire all weapons simultaneously, at different targets. Good, eh?) You may assume that it is wearing plate armour.

GROUND LEVEL ENTRANCES: In their heyday, these would have been bustling high-tech chambers; today, though, they are dirty and unsalvageable. For details see *Figure 3*, of which this is the key:

1. A trip wire planted by the New World Explorers. Any PC entering or leaving via this route will have a chance of setting it off (at your discretion, as usual). The booby trap it sets off is a simple one - there is a shrapnel bomb at either end. The blast area is a 4m wide strip between them; assume the damage it causes to be equal to 6 needle guns being fired at once (ouch!).

2. Ticket dispensers. These do not work, but then again they look like very open confession booths to the PCs anyway, and it is quite conceivable that they will try and use them as such. There are around 50 of them, arranged in a circle.

3. Elevator, connecting to a helipad terminal (see earlier).

4. Large turnstiles, leading into a very wide corridor (the ubiquitous ring-road). Every last one is jammed - isn't that always the way? - and the PCs must clamber over them or destroy them to continue on their way.

5. Large video screens, which stretch from floor to ceiling. A very bright Troubleshooter may even recognise them for what they are.

Note: An observant Troubleshooter may notice some fresh footprints in these on the floor that have quite clearly not been made by the team. They lead all over the place, but mostly towards the strange rotary devices (the turnstiles, dum-dum!).

HOBBAR
REAL ACTION SHOW

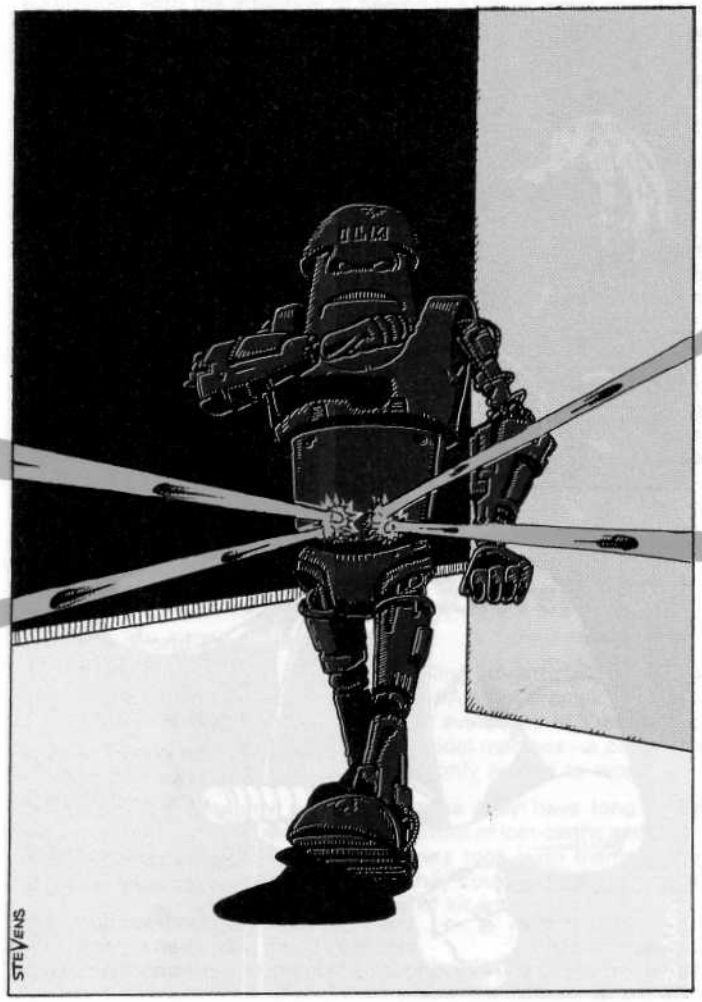
ROUND AND ROUND IN CIRCLES

Beyond the turnstiles, the Troubleshooters will find an open road-and walkway, about 30m wide. Way above it is a high domed roof where orange and white lights flicker on and off (cue simple-minded Troubleshooters gawping upwards and going "Gee, look at the pretty lights!"). Strange, unidentifiable noises echo all around; Troubleshooters are advised to be on the alert.

This is the ring-road, the doughnut, that acts as a central core for all of Fantasia's activity centres. Once upon a time, loud music and holographic displays would have thrilled crowds as they passed along to the central gaming areas. On the outer rim of the roadway there is a magnetically-levitated shuttle train. There may well be some carriages for the thing lying idle nearby (your choice). If the team elects to try out this new method of transport, there is a 100% chance of its malfunctioning. Once everyone has stepped aboard, the train automatically starts up, slowly accelerates up to its top speed of 40 km/h, and then cheerfully refuses to stop! PCs that do not jump off will find they have a long, repetitive journey ahead of them, as they circle the 2km track every three minutes.

Around the inner edge of the ringroad are the remains of various amusement and entertainment centres. These would once have included shops, restaurants and bars, all dotted with an alarming number of real action and video games. Almost everything here has been removed by thieves and scavengers, but if the team were to spend the next few days excavating they may well find some really exciting archaeological artifacts, such as squashed gum wrappers, dropped coins and the like. However, if you want to have some fun, allow them to grub around for a few minutes and then miraculously kick something in the dust. Then let them roll a d100 on the following Patent Old Reckoning Technology Dodgy Device Random Determination Table (™ applied for!):

Die roll	*Object Description*
01-10	*A holo-blade*, consisting of a pommel with a stud on it. Press the button and a holographic image of either a sword or dagger is projected from the end of the hilt. This blade has no effect on humans, but will do quite spectacular damage to Central Gaming Area bots.
11-15	*Infra-red laser gun*, which looks like an incredibly ancient slugthrower. When fired, it makes one heck of a bang, but nothing comes out of it! It has no effect on humans (though insect-brained Troubleshooters may believe they've been shot anyway), but has spectacular effects on Central Gaming Area bots.
16-25	*A thermos flask*, with a 50% chance of it containing cold coffee.
26-35	*A toy walking/talking robot*; there is a 50% chance of it working and scaring the PCs to death!
36-45	*An electric tricycle*, which unfortunately is no longer operational as its batteries are long dead.
46-55	*Advertising brochure for Fantasia* (vile commie propoganda that must be vapourised immediately).
55-70	*A small cloth bag* holding a large selection of many-sided dice.
71-80	*A disposable music-player* that is still capable of rendering some perverted Commie torture-music called 'The Rocky Horror Picture Show and 100 Other Ghoulish Delights' at an ear-splitting volume.
81-90	*A motorised skateboard.*
91-00	*A portable telephone.* Pity the PCs don't know anyone to call; however, if at any time the adventure begins to flag you can always have it ring and deliver some especially intriguing message!



As they troll around the ringroad, the Troubleshooters may freely interact with the carefully developed and subtly pre-planned inhabitants of the Ring Road Random Encounter Table. Anytime you get bored, simply roll those dice and let 'em have it! Keep the action flowing and the PCs on their toes and they'll never notice that you're making it all up as you go along. However, as before you shouldn't kill *all* of them - not just yet, anyway. All the stats for the NPCs are assembled together in the NPCs section at the end.

Die Roll	*Encounter*
01-10	A single securibot of the 'shoot first and ask questions later' mentality wheels its way around the corner, guns blazing. It has the same stats as the earlier one.
11-20	A terrifying phantasmal image, produced by ancient hologram projectors, floats down the corridor. It shows a giant, black-eared creature in red trousers being attacked by an enormous rubbery dog-like being. The holo-image may once have had a soundtrack, but now it's just a series of high-pitched squeaks.
21-30	A motley collection of scrubots glide around the bend and approach the PCs, attempting to clean everything in their path. What's the betting they don't get to do it?
31-43	A team of 1 to 5 securibots (your choice) attempt to interrogate and then arrest the PCs for trespass, littering and other trivial offences.
44-55	A single New World Explorer comes running out of the nearest ruined shop and takes a pot-shot at the PCs before running screaming down the corridor!
56-64	Two New World Explorers come running out of the nearest ruined shop and take a pot-shot at the PCs before running screaming down the corridor!
65-70	Four New World Explorer carefully stage an ambush of the PCs from the inside of a ruined shop. And *then* run screaming down the corridor.
76-84	An escaped zombie from the Central Gaming Area stalks up and attempts to eat the nearest PC.
85-93	A pack of 3D10 rats pours round the corner and charges straight at the PCs, squealing and shrieking. They will actually stream straight past the team and head for an exit (though the PCs won't know this).
94-00	A yeti from an earlier Fantasia game shows up and decides it wants a fight.

THE BIG ROOM (AND WE MEAN BIG!!)

In Fantasia, there were large auditoriums that allow non-participants to view the game being played in the Central Gaming Area. These large halls (four in all) can be found at regular intervals along the ring-road; they also give access to the Central Gaming Area itself. Fortunately for you, their audio-visual systems seized up long ago, so the Troubleshooters will enter the Gaming Area without knowing what is ahead. See *Figure 4* for the layout of one of the halls; this the key to the map:

1. Entrance.

2. Aisles, which lead down past the rows of seats to the stage.

3. Fire exits. All four are locked, of course. This should come as no surprise to the team, as every fire exit in Alpha Complex is locked at all times.

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4. Seats. These are arranged in rows of eight, and they are in surprisingly good condition considering how long they've been here, though they are very dank and dusty.

5. The stage. This is about a metre above the sloping floor of the auditorium, and can be reached by means of the small stairs at either side. The left hand side of the stage is covered in dust and debris, where a part of the ceiling appears to have fallen in.

6. Left wing door, blocked by a large concrete block which fell from the ceiling sometime ago. It leads to a complex of dressing and equipment rooms, but the team ain't gonna go this way anyway so we're not going to detail them. Us, lazy?

7. A very large video screen, now cracked and shattered.

8. Steps down. These lead to the Central Gaming Area. Originally, the various stars of the game would introduce themselves to the audience from the stage, before descending the steps to begin play.

THE CENTRAL GAMING AREA

Encourage the team to descend the mysterious stairs from the stage. Be inventive in your method of doing this, or simply send a pack of securibots in through the main door while they are on the stage. Be subtle.

At the bottom of the stairs there is a heavy steel door, standing slightly ajar. The combined strength of two Troubleshooters is needed to push it open, whereupon it will, of course, screech like all the demons of hell let loose. Beyond it, a dark metal corridor leads off for perhaps 150 metres, before ending in another solid door. This corridor has nothing especially deadly in it, but it echoes like heck. Every ten metres one of the investigators thinks he or she hears voices or footsteps, and will have to stop the party and listen for them. The echoes die away, and there is complete silence... As soon as they start walking again, the same thing happens, and so on.

The door at the other end is smaller than the first, and needs only a push to open. Once everyone is through, the door screeches back into its frame and locks itself with an ominous click which echoes away down the new corridor, which is narrow and apparently made of stone. The floor, though, is wet and slimy and the air is pervaded by a terrible stench, obviously caused by the watery stuff which is dripping from the ceiling. Above the passageway (and unknown to the team) there is a large chemical tank which has been steadily leaking its contents for several decades. As a result, the air in this passageway is now poisonous. Treat damage done by the poison as equivalent to a weapon on Column 5 of the Damage Table; damage should be rolled for every round spent in the corridor, which incidentally is forty metres long.

At the far end of this noxious place, some shallow steps lead up out of the ground. As they approach they should realise that the sound of dripping water has not ceased - ahead of them is the sound of rain hitting flagstones, punctuated by an occasional rumble of distant thunder. The Troubleshooters have arrived in *Deadlyville* (cue loud blast on organ - DEEDLE DEE! Deedle Deedle DEE DEE!!).

DEADLYVILLE!!

The village of Deadlyville currently occupies all of the Central Gaming Area. All of its wooden houses are tall and decidedly Gothic, their darkened windows gazing emptily down like the baleful eyes of the dead on the rain-swept settlement. All, that is, except for one house, where an illuminated upper storey window glimmers down like a beacon through the storm. (Isn't this a truly great bit of writing? We bet you wish you could write *Paranoia* scenarios as good as this one! Ahem, back to the clich-e-s...) The steps from the passageway rise up out the open mouth of a grave, and the Troubleshooters find themselves in the centre of a graveyard, decorated with the traditional crosses, statues and headstones. A mist starts to descend, damp and cloying, and the silence, if anything, gets even quieter... The thunder rumbles overhead, punctuated by brilliant flashes of forked lightning which flash across the sky with a light almost as bright as a Troubleshooter getting vapourised!

Through the mist, the Troubleshooters should just be able make out the grim shape of a small, spired church; through its stained glass windows an orange light flickers wanly. Sombre organ music floats down on the breeze. All of a sudden...

Whinging GMs Note: We interrupt this dead exciting bit with an important message. Deadlyville is, like, HUGE! But since it's unlikely that the team will ever get beyond this graveyard we haven't drawn a map. Yes, we know, but there it is. Should the Troubleshooters get away with something unexpected you will have to partake of the time-honoured gaming ritual known as 'winging it'. You should also hang your head in shame that the PCs have got one over on you, and should resolve to kill the bums at the first likely opportunity.

All of a sudden... something large and dark creeps up behind a Troubleshooter and taps him or her on the shoulder. On turning round, the poor little Alpha Complexer comes face to face with Count Dracula in all his undead glory. The Count lifts his night-black cloak and wails 'Wooooaaaahhhh!' (you know, just like he does in 'Scooby Doo') and then tries to bite the PC on the neck. (See the NPCs section at the end for all his personal details.)

While this is happening, the large leathery Gargoyle swoops down from the roof of the church, talons spread wide, and attacks the Troubleshooters from the air.

After two rounds of unadulterated mayhem, frantic screaming and soiled underwear, the Werewolf and Frankenstein's Monster lumber out of the mist and join the fray...

This battle should give you endless seconds of fun as the PCs trip over gravestones in the dark, shoot one another, narrowly avoid the clutching grasps of the monsters only to run into another one, and so on. If you want to simulate this battle on the table-top, give each of your players a Troubleshooter figure, let them place it in its starting position, then make them put on blindfolds. This will realistically simulate fighting undead monsters in a muddy graveyard at midnight in thick mist during a thunderstorm (well, almost - try opening a window, screaming a lot and filling their shoes with mud to add to the realism if you wish, but don't blame us for the consequences).

When all the killing is over give the PCs a few minutes to regroup (let the players catch their breath, gulp down down some liquid refreshment and tear up their old character sheets) then hit 'em with this...

THE FINAL CONFLICT

It all goes quiet in the graveyard. The mist begins to clear and the storm quietens a little. Slowly, though, it dawns on the Troubleshooters that there is another sound - a scratching and rasping noise. Without any warning whatsoever, and with a coordination worthy of a Japanese synchronised swimming team, a horde of undead Zombies burst out of their graves. The horrific creatures pull themselves up out of the ground in groups of 5 to 10, and begin to lumber towards the Troubleshooters (they may mumble 'Blood! Blood!' at your discretion).

The Troubleshooters have two obvious choices. They can run for the sinister church with the flickering lights and sinister organ music and

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hope to find sanctuary (are you kidding?), or they can get out the way they came in - down the steps! Of course, if they choose the latter they'll get about halfway down the passage before they remember that the door locked itself. By this time the Zombies will have reached the open grave at the top of the steps, and all means of escape will be cut off. (The door, incidentally, has armour equivalent to plate, and should be treated as a vehicle for damage effects. Blowing this door off will give the Zombies access to the whole of Fantasia, and they will pursue the Troubleshooters until their dying... er, until they fall apart.)

Of course, Troubleshooters who feel that the church is a safer bet are in for a big surprise.

THE CHURCH

As soon as they pull open the large oak doors of the church, the Troubleshooters find themselves confronted with 6 hairy men clad only in loin-cloths and huddled around a bonfire. They will, of course, take up their arms and attack immediately, making no distinction between the living and the undead. The Troubleshooters will find themselves caught in the crossfire between half a dozen New World Explorers and a horde of ravening Zombies, all intent on killing them!

While this ghastly scene of mayhem and bloodshed continues, let us look around this pleasant little church, as depicted in *Figure 5*. It's a rather small little place, sparsely decorated with a few statues and carvings, though many have been flung to the ground and are broken. 1) is the pair of heavy oak doors, bound with iron, which the team flung open when they arrived. 2) are the pews, carved from some strange brown organic substance that has been polished up to look like genuine plastic. At 3) we find the pews which would once have held an angelic choir. 4) is the altar, now just a bare stone block. And of course at 5) there is the bonfire, around which once sat six hairy loonies, who are at this moment killing the Troubleshooters...

JUST IN CASE SOMEONE SURVIVES...

And so we draw a veil over this sorry scene of death and carnage. But wait! you say, my Troubleshooters are so hot they survived all this and are at this moment heading back out into the viewing auditorium with the intention of fleeing the place; what shall I do? Well, GM, get after 'em. All those Zombies ain't gonna let 'em go, now are they? And there are bound to be some more of those kerazy New World Explorers, and securibots, and many more. Play the escape from Fantasia as a frenetic chase sequence and we can guarantee your PCs will have fun, even while they are dying. Well, maybe.

THE DEBRIEFING

There is no debriefing. This adventure should not be survivable unless you've really screwed up your GMing. Any survivors who claim to have come from ILM Sector will, of course, be lying (they may even be Commie spies trying to infiltrate Alpha Complex) and they will, of course, be executed for Treason.

But... in the very unlikely event that a Troubleshooter does get back to Alpha Complex with a worthwhile piece of Old Reckoning Technology, then you may be merciful (pah! you'd never catch us being merciful). This is, of course, providing the player thinks up a good report for his Troubleshooter and hands over a piece of equipment that is both operational and of obvious practical use. You'll just have to grit your teeth and make a note to kill his Troubleshooter *first* next time. That'll teach him.

THE NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

The New World Explorers

These loonies are a large group of travelling adventurers, made up of renegade Troubleshooters from another Alpha Complex. Their experiences Outside have driven each and every one of them crazy, such that they are now a group of homicidal maniacs - a condition that the reactivation of ILM Sector has only served to worsen.

None of them wear any armour, because they have long since discarded all Alpha Complex clothing in favour of loin-cloths and bearskins. However, the New World Explorers took with them all the weapons and survival equipment that they could. The result is that the PCs may well find a good selection of kit from the Other Equipment Table on their bodies.

During play you can assume that each New Worlder has the same abilities and skills:

Primary Attributes		*Secondary Attributes*	
Strength	15	Carrying Capacity	40
Endurance	10	Damage Bonus	+1
Agility	12	Macho Bonus	—
Manual Dexterity	15	Melee Bonus	+3
Moxie	4	Aimed Weapon Bonus	+10
Chutzpah	8	Comprehension Bonus	-3
Mechanical Aptitude	18	Believability Bonus	-5
Power Index	12	Repair Bonus	+15

Skills

Basics (1)
Melee Combat (2) — Knife (3)
Aimed Weapons (2) — Projectile (3)
Hostile Environments (1) — Survival (2)
Personal Development (1)

As mentioned earlier, the New World Explorers are all well armed; to decide what weapons they are using, roll a D100 on this table:

Die Roll	*Weapon*
01-10	Hand laser
11-18	Laser rifle
19-30	Energy pistol
31-45	Cone rifle★
46-55	Slugthrower★
56-65	Slugthrower (semi-automatic)★
66-75	Bow & arrows
76-85	Sword
86-90	Force sword
91-00	Club

★ indicates you should also roll on the following table for the type of shells used in the weapon:

Die Roll	*Shell Type*
01-40	Solid slug
41-60	Dum-dum
61-80	HE
81-00	AP

Bots of the Central Gaming Area

Most of the NPCs encountered will be robots. These fall into two separate categories - the securibots (see the text earlier) and the

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Central Gaming Area bots. All the bots in the latter category share a common humanoid design, although their external appearance may vary wildly. Their bot brains contain programs which allow each bot to play its role in the scenario in question. However, just like the author, these programs have been corrupted. The bots cannot now distinguish between fantasy and reality. Nothing new here, you may say, most of *White Dwarf*'s readers are the same; but in this case it means that the bots are going to actively try following their programmed motivations, and kill every they come across! Each bot has the equivalent of padding armour protection, but their abilities are quite different:

Count Dracula: The archetypal vampire, tall, thin and dark-haired. He comes complete with fangs and flowing cape. Combat Skill - unarmed, bite 40%. The Count's fangs are treated as Column 6 weapons.

The Gargoyle: This ghastly thing flies on leathery wings (rocket assisted, of course), and attacks with terrible blunt stone talons. Combat Skill - talon 35%. Each counts as brass knuckles for damage purposes.

Werewolf: Large, hairy and with his mouth in a permanent snarl, old Wolfie is not a pleasant character. He leaps at his victims, attacking with claws and fangs. Combat Skill - claws/fangs 45%. They count as knives for damage purposes.

Frankenstein's Monster: This one is big and tough and likes stomping on pesky little Troubleshooters. You know what old Frankie looks like - just describe him so he sounds scary instead of cute! In combat he just pummels away with his two oversized fists. Combat Skill - unarmed, fists 40%. Treat his hands as clubs for determining damage.

Zombies: Dressed in rotting shrouds, their skin hanging away in clumps to reveal their bulging inner organs, the Zombies are truly revolting things. They appear in all shapes, sizes and colours, and are armed with a variety of interesting weapons. To decide what to arm each one with, roll a D100 on the Zombie Weapon Table below. Combat Skill - melee combat 30%, bite 25%.

Die Roll	*Weapon*
01-30	Club (piece of bone)
31-50	Sword (old, jagged and rusty)
51-70	Knife (old, rusty and jagged)
71-00	A different Club (a rock)

TWO NEW 10 PROB REAL ACTION SHOW

The Yeti: Though not encountered in the Central Gaming Area, the Yeti is of the same design as the other bots. This beastie is large, white and furry. Its two piercing red eyes lock onto a victim and continue to stare at it until its attack is over. Combat Skill - unarmed, fists 40%. Treat its fists as brass knuckles when working out damage.

APPENDICES

PC Security Levels: This adventure has been designed ideally for use by a Troubleshooter team of clearances YELLOW, YELLOW plus ORANGE, or ORANGE. It is assumed that Team Leader will be temporarily promoted to GREEN. If you want to use it with a higher group of PCs, make the bad guys tougher too!

The Cavalry - Send In The Clones: The Computer will only supply clones when the team is absolutely desperate for them - when losses stand at 50% or more. It will take between 3 and 4 hours for a new clone to get to ILM Sector, and may then spend some time searching for the others (though their trail of destruction may not be too hard to follow).

The Cooler: Fantasia has a good way of dealing with troublemakers. The securibots apprehend the offenders and drag them off to lock in small cells, hidden in a labyrinthine maze of corridors full of securibots and locked doors. Troubleshooters who are taken to The Cooler will never get out alive. Better still, don't waste time - kill them where they stand!

Future Missions To ILM Sector: This sector is quite large, and the troubleshooters will only scratch at its surface during this adventure. Hidden within it are power generators, bot production and maintenance facilities, store rooms and maybe other Gaming Areas too. If your players really hated this adventure, how could you fail to send them back here at the earliest opportunity?

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Alright, hands up all those who spotted where we stole the ideas for this adventure from then?:
A wide selection of horror movies and spoofs, especially *The Rocky Horror Picture Show.*
The *Scooby Doo Show* (a great favourite of the editors).
And *Dream Park* by Larry Niven and Steven Barnes. Thanks chaps, and sorry we ripped you off.

(This adventure was developed for White Dwarf by the ever-vigilant servant of The Computer, Marc Gascoigne.)

This month: Colin Dixon

A man who gets to sit around all day at Games Workshop - *and do nothing but paint figures!*

Little did Colin Dixon realise that when he entered the Chaos Battle Banner competition in the *Citadel Compendium* that he would win... Modest little chap. Little did he know that — as a direct result of his winning — John Blanche would actually offer him a job... Little did he know that one day he would appear on the pages of *White Dwarf* — a magazine he reads every night before going to bed... In fact, Colin didn't know a great deal, except about figure painting, at which he is moderately brill. OK, quite brill. Colin is also worshipped by an obscure sect of Cthulhoid entities. One of these statements may be a lie.

Chained in a small, darkened room by the editorial bullies until I agreed to do *'Eavy Metal*. No food for days, no water, just notepaper and chewed biros pushed under the door... So...

In The Beginning...

There is nothing worse than finding a flash line on a figure, so the first job is to clean off all the bits of excess metal - the flash lines and the odd lumps that get left on the casting. A sharp blade and modelling files are the best tools for this job. Be careful doing this, as painting figures is a lot harder with stumpy, shortened finger-ends. Once this is done, the figure can be firmly fixed to a base, using some sort of epoxy resin or superglue.

If you want the figure to have a scenic base, this is probably the best time to do the modelling - because we don't want to get putty on the painted model, do we? Scenic bases are easy to construct using any commercial modelling putty (*Milliput* or *Tamiya* putty etc) There's no need to buy any special tools, as I find a compass point or a pin are sufficient. Simply stippling the putty with the point of the compass will give an effective grass finish.

An easier way of achieving a grass effect is to mix sand and flock powder with PVA glue and then spread the resulting mixture on the base. Allow this to dry and the base is finished. If you leave the base until the figure has been painted and varnished, you can simply paint the base with PVA glue and then pour flock powder over it. All you then have to do is shake off the excess. All of this means that you don't have to bother with painting the base. There are other methods, but these are the three that I use.

Lurking Just Beneath The Surface...

After the base is finished, I undercoat the figure — using a matt white carbody primer in most cases. On the other hand, if the figure is heavily armoured, it gets a coat of black undercoat, as this gives a better base colour armour. Once this base is thoroughly dry, I put a wash of (usually brown) ink over the whole figure. This helps to pick out the fine detail.

Once all this lot has dried, the real job of painting begins. As far as paints go, I use a mixture of *Citadel* Acrylics and artists inks. A number 1 or 2 sized brush is ideal as well, because a good quality sable has as fine a point as a size 0 or 00, and it can hold more paint at one go.

Fig 1: Converted C15 orc flying MAG-ies Death Banner
Figs 2-10: Samples of Colin's great shield designs.
Fig 11: Manfred (Heroic Fighters) from Citadel's latest boxed set.
Fig 12: C17 Skeleton.
Fig 13 & 14: Sauron the Dark Lord & Gandalf Greyhame, two upcoming additions to the Middle-earth range.
Fig 15 & 16: New F5 Paladins.

Fig 1

Fig 2

Fig 3

Fig 4

Fig 5

Fig 6

Fig 7

Fig 8

Fig 9

Fig 10

Fig 11

Fig 17: One of this months new C35 Chaos Warriors.
Fig 18: C23 Ogre Executioner (available next month).
Fig 19 & 20: Some of the variants of the new addition to the Citadel Plastics Range, The Skeleton Horde.
Fig 21: ADD 86 Minotaur-one of Colin's best paint jobs to date.
Fig 22: The Black Ace Orcs stand ready for battle.
Fig 23 & 24: The New Skeleton Regiment of Reknown & the remade Bugmans Dwarf Ranger's, coming soon from the Citadel Forges.

Fig 12

Fig 13

Fig 14

Fig 15

Fig 16

Fig 17

Fig 18

Fig 19

Fig 20

Fig 21

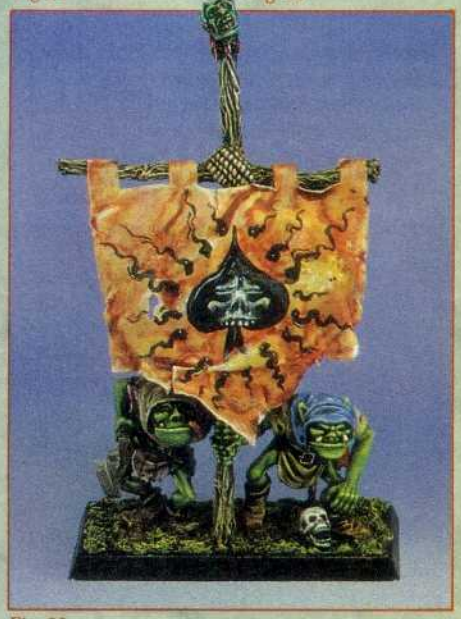


Fig 22

Fig 23

Fig 24

Flesh, Flesh!

I always start a figure with the flesh. I prefer to start work on areas of shadow and gradually build up to the highlights. The paint is thinned right down when applied in many layers like this, and the colours are blended on the figures as I go on.

The eyes sockets are covered in a darker tone of whatever flesh tint I am using on the rest of the figure. The eyeball then gets painted white. Once dry (and this doesn't take long), a dot of black in the centre of the eye sees it finished - unless you have a steady enough hand to manage a highlight in the eye. Faces get finished with a little red on the lips and cheeks, and I find that a wash of blue ink under the eyes and around the chin gives a really haggard look.

Hair and fur are possibly the easiest and quickest things to paint. Paint the whole of the furry/hairy area with the shade that you want, then use a wash of a darker tone over it. When all this lot is dry, mix a little white into some more of the original shade and dry brush this over the whole area.

Dedicated Follower of Fashion

The clothing on a figure always looks more interesting when it is brightened up a little. Stripes, checks and dots are all quick and easy to do with a little practice. Why not paint each trouser leg a different colour? Virtually anything goes.

When painting iron or steel armour and metal I use three colours: black, chainmail and silver. The whole of the area that needs to be "iron" gets painted black (which is why the black undercoat gets used on heavily armoured figures). These bits are then drybrushed with chainmail and given a highlighting with touches of silver. Rust - on orcs or undead figures, for example - is easy to do using a mixture of red and brown. Run a wash of this mix over the whole surface and it will collect around rivets and joints.

Steel is done in much the same sort of way, but with a little more silver. A little blue, if mixed in the final silver highlights, gives an interesting effect. Gold, bronze and copper are all done in the same way, but using brown and various shades of yellow to arrive at the final look.

Chaos, Death and... Washes of Ink?

Any colour - not just the logical ones - can be used in metals. This is especially good for Chaos armour. First paint the armour as though it were iron or steel. Then, using very thin washes of ink, gradually build up the other colours. Just make sure that each layer has dried before moving on to the next. If this is used on weapons, such as swords, it gives them a really magical look.

Now that the Chaos armour is done, why not stick on a couple of runes? Everything looks and feels better for a good rune. Or alternatively, why not paint metal armour without using metal paint?

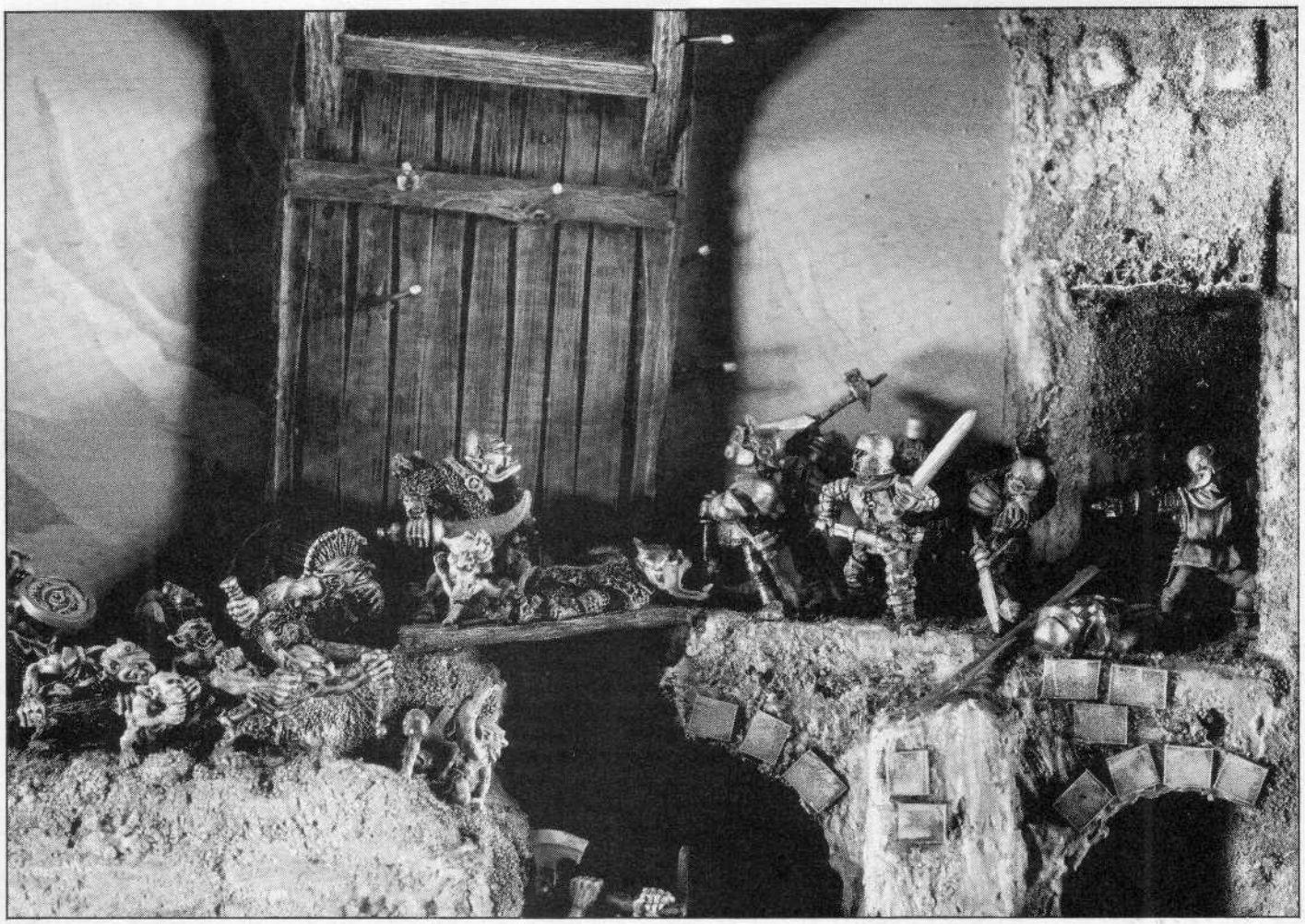
All sorts of metal finishes can be easily achieved although I think that gold, copper and bronze look best. The techniques used can be the same as for flesh and cloth, but it is best to keep away from dull colours. Washes of ink over metal bases are my favourites, but this does take a long time to reach a good finish.

I like to spend quite a lot of time on the shield if the figure has one. If the centre boss is removed and the hole filled in (with something like Milliput), this provides a better painting surface - which you can really go to town on. If you are stuck for ideas, it might help to get hold of a few heraldry or fantasy art books. Again, shields always look good with a few runes on them, although my favoutite design - and the one I use most - is the good old skull.

Bring On The Sticky Little Fingers

It only remains to paint the base. All finished. Or is it? Along comes your younger brother or a friend with two right hands and with sticky little fingers - and "Sorry, didn't mean to touch it..." Wipe away your tears and get the varnish out. Personally, I prefer matt varnish, but I always give the figures a coat of gloss first.

Right, that's it. Whatever the results, never give up. Happy Painting.



FRACAS!

Democracy is wonderful, if somewhat slow. You might remember the reader's poll that was included in the last issue. A simple job, so we thought, to sit down and collate all the replies. Not so. After a little over a week, the returned forms are in a not-so-little pile of 2000 or so (the previous record on returns being a few under 900, apparently). There will now be a short delay in announcing the results while Paul sits down, takes off his shoes and socks, and gets counting. However, the high response - and no sign of stopping yet - means that, for once, the views of the bulk of the readership will come to the fore, rather than those of a highly motivated (and perhaps unrepresentative) minority. If you're reading this before 1st September, you still have time to get your vote sent in.

Just when you thought it was safe to go back into the Dark Land of Mordor... comes *MERP II*, with completely revised rules, new cover art and a revised format as a boxed set and/or a 128 page perfect bound book. I'd love to be able to tell you more, but ICE don't seem to be answering the phone at the moment.

However, Palladium do answer the phone. So far, the 'sleeper' of 1986 has to be *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles & Other Strangeness*. It's proved to be staggeringly popular in a quiet sort of way, so all those people who bought it will be pleased to know that *TMNT Adventures* is out. This is a 48-page adventure specifically for the Ninja Turtles themselves, and it also features a 10 page comic strip, specially commissioned for the module. After that comes *Road Hogs*, an 'After the Bomb' type supplement for TMNT.

One of the big problems with *Paranoia* is the box. OK, so you can keep all the ruley things in one convenient place, but it's simply not hard enough for use as a patent all-action paranoia-inducer - ie you can't hit the players with the box without it undergoing severe deformation.

Fortunately, the hardback edition of the Paranoia rules can save the day. It has all the same old rules that every Commie Mutant Traitor already ignores, but the hardback is (A) cheaper and (B) a lot more intimidating than the box. Just think, real role playing - as Internal Security ask those difficult little questions - need no longer take place solely in the mind... Further good news on the Paranoia front is that all the US adventures are to be reprinted in the UK (which saves hard earned credits) as back-to-back double adventures. Better still, news of the latest adventure is that it is to be *Orc Busters*. The subject matter? Paranoia meets D&D...

If you like driving (over other people), *Car Wars Expansion Set 9* gives you a load more game maps to do it on... and *Uncle Albert's 2036 Update* gives you lots more ways of doing it. Scheduled for an October release in the States, *Expansion Set 10* will include counters from nearly everywhere: Dueltrack, assorted earlier Expansion sets and anywhere else a Car Wars counter might be lurking. Speaking of autoduelling, *GURPS*, the Steve Jackson Games' role-playing system, is due to link in with Car Wars through *GURPS Autoduel*: a book format rpg supplement and/or source pack for role-playing in the Car Wars future.

For all you fans of tentacled horrors and gibbering loathsomenesses, *Spawn of Azathoth* (£15.95) is the latest Call of Cthulhu (awwh, you guessed) adventure pack. This is another boxed mega-scenario (£15.95) from those wonderfully fevered people at Chaosium. Why is it that CoC always seems to bring out the best in game writers?

Yet more news of the d100. After Paul Cockburn told you all those fibettes about it actually being available, apparently the manufacturers are having some problems with the moulds. However, its non-availability has not stopped people sending us d100 tables.

Meanwhile, back at the GW ranch, the big rules round up continues. Strange, gibbery conversations can be heard echoing down the corridors: 'Who's got insanity?' and 'Where's the poison...', not forgetting 'AAAARRRGG-HHHHHH!' *WARPS* is proceeding to plan, although the name has been changed to *WFRP* (pronounced WOOF-rup) - Warhammer Fantasy Role-Playing.

WARPS/WFRP is being produced by (in their own words) 'the cream of the Games Workshop intelligentsia', and only now can it be revealed that the character generation system includes over 100 skills and 100 possible careers (is this a record of some kind?); that there are eight different sorts of wizard, plus clerics, druids and runesingers who can all use different sorts of magic; that there are millions (I think they are exagerating a smidge with this bit) of new and slightly used (in Warhammer Battle) monsters; that there will be two campaigns - background packs and lots of module-sized adventures - released almost immediately, one by Paul Vernon and the other by Graeme Davis, Jim Bambra and Phil Gallagher; that the 100mph horses have been taken out of the game (boo!); and that the WARPS/WFRP book will include 'The Oldenhaller Contract', a starting adventure by Richard Halliwell...

WARPS/WFRP is currently on schedule for a 1st November release date, and as this is being written it's just starting to go to typesetting and production. Next month's *White Dwarf* will include a special WARPS/WFRP supplement as a taster for the system.

With lots of new stuff just into the shops - the *D&D Immortals Set*, *Dungeoneer's Survival Guide* and *MSH Advanced Rules* - things are entering another quiet phase for TSR where new goodies are concerned. The fabled *Unearthed Arcana II* - replaced in the early '86 schedules by the DSG - has still to enter production. Its second replacement for 1986 is the *Wilderness Survival Guide*.

TSR UK's *Creature Catalogue* (the last project that Jim Bambra and Phil Gallagher worked on for TSR before becoming involved in WARPS) has been despatched to the States for production. Creature Catalogue is a D&D 'Monster Manual', which is a far better proposition than it sounds. Look for this one sometime just before Christmas. If you can get hold of a copy, TSR UK's other major - no, really, it is - contribution to gaming in 1986 is ST1 'Up the Garden Path', a fairly strange little adventure based in and around Stoke Garden Festival.

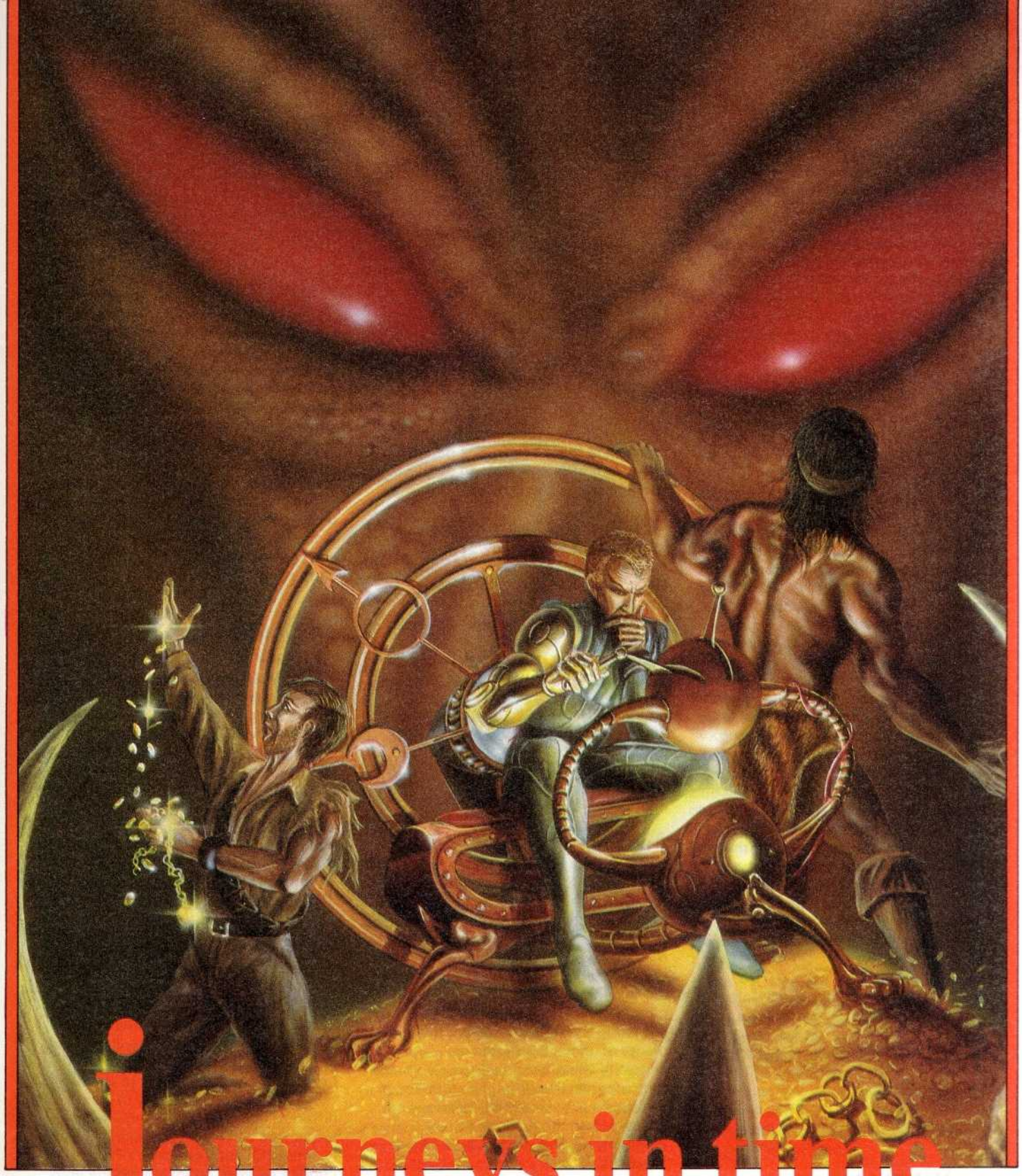
By any standards, *Dragonaid* must be judged to have been a success. Apart from setting a new D&D Marathon record - 84 hours of continuous play - the event also managed to raise over £1500 while it lasted, with the promise of more to come as the sponsorship money rolls in. The 84-hour extravaganza should also appear in the *Guinness Book of Records*, as the result (which handily beats the previous 66 hours' worth) came in just before the book went to press.

After all the excitement of shooting people down in WW1 dogfights with Ace of Aces and hacking up your best friends (in the nicest possible way) with Lost Worlds books, you can now use much the same sort of system to wander around a fantasy dungeon. *Combat Heroes*, by Joe Dever, takes elements of the Ace of Aces here's-what-you-see-now-pick-a-manoeuvre system, and two-player gamebooks to give quite an interesting looking little game. If your taste runs to gamebooks they are worth checking out and, unlike lots of the view-option system games, this one can be played solo.

And finally, a brief mention of *Slaughter Margin*, the next adventure for the *Judge Dredd RPG*. This is going to be a boxed set, including maps. Judges will once more get the chance to prove that they are warm, wonderful, compassionate upholders of the Law... or (probably) not.

And finally, finally, the winners of the *Beauty and the Beast* competition were Simon Ayres, Noel Bateman, Daniel Cardle, Jason Cockcroft and Andrew Mclatyre who will already have received their copies of Chris Achilleos' latest book, *Sirens*.

***Sirens* is a book full of calliphygan (look it up) images, and very well done they are too. Chris Achilleos' work has graced many a cover of *White Dwarf* in the past, as well as book covers on works by major authors such as Michael Moorcock. However, Achilleos may not be quite so well-known to Dwarf readers as the producer of film posters ... Unlike the previous book, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Sirens* includes text by Nigel Suckling, detailing Achilleos' methods of working. *Sirens* is an interesting read and, if all else fails, you can sit back and admire the quality of the artwork...**



Journeys in time

by Stephen Palmer

You might not think fiddling with time and role playing would go together too well, but with a little effort they can be made to work, giving many extra options for scenarios and characters. Time has not always been dealt with terribly well by fantasy and sf authors (with a notable and fascinating exception being Gene Wolfe), and not at all by many role-players. I think it is worth a little consideration by GMs, the advantages of a workable system being many. I have fiddled with time in my own campaign, and it is curious how the various consequences and ideas have now become an integral part of the campaign, sometimes coming up without me noticing, sometimes pointed out by the

Theoretically, it is possible to move forwards in time relative to the rest of humanity (or whatever is your reference point) due to the Einstein time-dilation effect, which occurs at speeds approaching that of light. Unfortunately, Einsteins theories do not permit the reverse operation. However, since relativity is not normally an important part of average campaign, we shall dispense with these minor points for the purposes of this article...

Concepts of Time

These ideas of time in a universe or world are closely associated with the idea of paradox. A paradox, in the time sense, is something in which two or more events conflict and cannot be resolved, or some event in which is apparently impossible — such as being your own father.

Organic Concept

This idea depicts time as something which will itself react to changes in its structure. Should a paradoxical event be attempted somewhere in the normal run of things, time will react in some way so as to either nullify or counter-act it. For example, if a man were to go back in time and try to do something which would change history, an apparent paradox when seen in his eyes, it would either be impossible, or be later counteracted so as to restore normality. Thus Alfred Zipp, a time-traveller off to assassinate President Kennedy in 1961, failed.

The idea is nicely illustrated in *The Hitch-Hikers Guide to the Galaxy*, when Ford realises that nothing he does on the Earth two million years before the Vogons destroy it will affect anything — he and Arthur have already experienced the future, and know it will happen.

The alternative to simple failure is that the paradoxical event does happen, but providing it is minor compared to the major historical events, it will be unrecognised. This type of universe would be different to the one above, since here minor paradoxes can exist. Major ones can not work, or will be counteracted (see **Major and Minor Events**).

Both these types postulate a Universal Time Continuum (UTC), the normal flow of time, if you like. It is interesting to note that most people conceive of time as a river. Gene Wolfe, in *The Book of the New Sun,* saw it as a sea, with currents and other movements, and this can be a useful analogy and imagining aid.

Parallel Worlds

The cases above where paradoxes can exist lead to a fascinating idea, that of alternative universes. There are an infinite number of them, in which every possible path of history is followed. Each universe has its own unique UTC, but can only be entered by someone doing something temporally unnatural in their own universe which actually happened in another, parallel world.

This concept is very nicely illustrated by an episode of *Star Trek* called *City on the Edge of Forever.* Dr. McCoy, in a bout of drug induced insanity, jumps through a time-portal into the America of the 1930s. He there does something that changes the course of history relative to Kirk and the rest — the Enterprise disappears since in this new universe it never existed. The landing party are stranded. Kirk and Spock go back to determine what McCoy did and try to stop it by appearing before he does — using the time portal again. It turns out that someone has to stop McCoy rescuing an influential social worker from death: if she lives America delays its entry into World War II and Nazi Germany develops the atomic bomb first, subsequently either capturing or destroying the world. Kirk does stop McCoy and they return to their own universe in the process. The parallel universe idea is only implied by this episode, not explicitly stated.

The parallel universe concept is very interesting in that it allows paradoxical events (which are always fascinating and a superb source of rpg ideas!) but also ways of stopping or reversing them. It assumes one true universe, that is experienced in the players' campaign. Apart from *City* being a beautifully written and moving story, there is one other interesing point — Kirk, just before he and Spock leave, tells the rest of the landing party that they too must go back and try to do the task, once they think sufficient time has passed (relative to them). There are a multitude of scenarios coming from that idea!

Robert Heinlein, in his *Number of the Beast*, introduced a similar and rather clever idea. A professor discovers there are three dimensions of time as well as space, which implies six to the power six to the power six universes — a very large number... Each is related to the normal universe (again there is a true or normal home universe) but they get more and more distorted and unusual as you move out along the six axes. Again, there is plenty of scope here for ideas — such as people of the other universes also having the means to travel them and go about their various businesses, nefarious or otherwise. In the book, the main characters had such a means, built into a futuristic car.

Foci

The *Star Trek* episode mentioned above combines another idea into its plot. The influential social worker who must die is a focal point in time, to which temporally moving persons or objects are drawn. This idea could work in a number of universe types — in the parallel universe concept, it would work just as in the *Star Trek* story, the characters being inevitably drawn to the point however they act. It would also work quite nicely in the major and minor event type below — here, all paradoxes involving these focal points would be major ones, and forbidden by the forces of time, but minor ones could be allowed. These wouldn't involve the focal points at all, which are the fundamentally important events and persons of history. These are inviolate.

Major and Minor

Following from the organic concept and the idea of foci we can construct another idea. "World History" consists of major events — who after all has heard of Alfred Zipp, who went back in time and stole a few mint 1900 pennies for his collection? Extending this, we could have a universe where minor paradoxes can occur, but major ones cannot. Anything which would alter collective species or racial history, such as the death of a world leader, would be a major paradox, and the vast forces of time would stop it happening.

The Paradoxic Universe

The opposite to the organic universe is the paradoxic universe. Here, all historical events are only inviolate with respect to the very end of the universe — paradoxes can and must happen so that history, according to someone at the end of time, is correct ie. the paradoxes themselves are an integral part of history. Time-travellers would provide the paradoxes.

The Web Concept

This is a difficult idea to sustain and use, but has interesting points. The UTC is infinite, and can be altered at will by anyone with such ability. History is not inviolate at all, and thus paradoxes are perfectly possible. History will thus depend only on people's memories — it will be possible for two people to experience the same portion of history in completely different ways. This idea requires a rather free and easy campaign (temporally speaking) but has plenty of options for conflict beween opposing groups who want to order events in their own ways. In fact, any important part of the campaign could be changed and changed again many times, if the people involved were very persistent. They would have serial memories of all the re-runs, and the decisions that were made when undertaking them, but each re-run would have to completely cancel the previous one.

For example, suppose there are two time travelling opponents, Alfred Zipp and Jim Smith. These two fight a battle which Alf wins — but then Jim goes back and changes the outcome by using a sword and the UTC from that point on is

changed. Then Alf goes back with a pistol, and wins the fight. Jim escapes, but goes back with a laser cannon... and so on. Each man would have serial memories of the various re-runs, but according to some-one else, the result, and history from there on, would be according to the last re-run: Jim and the laser cannon.

One problem emerging from the web concept is that of meeting yourself if you go back in time. Why shouldn't Jim meet himself fighting Alf when he goes back? The answer is to remove the old Jim from the UTC as soon as a new jim enters; as the UTC is altered he can either re-live the future events he has in his memory, or live them a different way. As I said, this concept is very free and easy, and rather difficult to imagine in use. I think it would have to be used in a specifically time-orientated campaign, and probably not a very serious one...

The Seas of Time

A viable alterative to all of the above is to use either a self-consistent adaption of one, or any other interesting variation. There is a lot to be said for making a temporal system less cut-and-dried; this will give time-manipulation a more mysterious and sacred air, which is beneficial. It also leaves room for GMs to improvise events as they desire, within a framework of some sort. The Sea idea could be used here allowing temporally freed characters abilities or effects as necessary, rather than designing them all exactly right from the start. However, as I have said, it is wise to determine at least the framework of a temporal system otherwise great confusion can result!

Travellers in Time

Most fantasy and sf authors allow their time-hopping characters extraordinary intelligence and truly remarkable memory. They have to remember vast tracts of history, relate to many different eras, and be conscious of virtually the entire continuum. Whilst a special being with time-related abilities should be able to do this, your average man such as Alfred Zipp, who accidentally discovers a time-machine or was born with special mental abilities should not — at least not initially. Alfred Zipp would, I think, be very confused, reacting somewhat imperfectly to his situation. It would take a lot of subjective time for him to sort out his memories; and as he would be unsure as to what was happening when he started out he might never fully understand. Having said that, confused or rather uncertain time-travellers do make superb NPCs, and many a plot can be hung thereon.

I have found two methods of involving PCs and time-travel in my own D&D campaign. One is never to allow the players to go back in time, apart from brief and very controlled forays when they cannot, or don't want to, do anything paradoxical. Travel into the future is fine however, presenting a lot less difficulty! The alternative, and this is very useful in a historical-type campaign, is to establish the players home time, and allow brief journeys back and forth from there, always returning to the same era. Careful design can ensure paradoxes are avoided. One of the most rewarding thing is that players are allowed to research and experience history without recourse to inaccurate half-remembered legends and dusty old scrolls, although these undoubtedly have their uses!

In the special being category, there are a number of interesting options. It could be that the vast impersonal forces of time, which might disallow or subtly reverse paradoxes, are personified by one or more special beings. It is their duty to exist in the UTC and keep or bring about normality. Alternatively, the beings could be part of the paradoxic universe, watching for the key historical figures to appear and then ferrying them back or forwards to perform their historical function.

Another possibility is that the whole of time itself is personified by one or more beings (time was often thought of like this, as in the Old Father Time figure of many mythos). These beings would thus allow or disallow events as they saw fit, shaping history as they desired. Though such figures would fit in the paradoxic universe, they are perfectly suited to the major/minor concept.

Abilities

Apart from time-travelling, with or without others, beings who have temporal abilities might have other powers — for example, the increase or decrease of the rate of time passing could be altered. Perhaps a friendly person might help a D&D party raid a temple by slowing their subjective time-flow, maybe doubling the amount of time they have to do the job. This can be extended to allow super *slow* and *haste* effects. *Timestop* is already available, but only to eighteenth level MUs, being the end-point of the *slow* effect. Another possibility is that rather than beings being transportable through time, only objects can be so treated. This gives rise to many interesting ideas, such as messages from the past or future, technological items coming down through time to end up as magic items or artifacts, and so on. It also limits the impact of time manipulation for GMs who don't want to risk the full implications of beings travelling in time!

Another interesting possibility is the alternation of events by the deletion or insertion of chunks of time. Perhaps a part could complete a temple raid mission by the insertion of an extra hour into their subjective time continuum. Time deletion would work best in the parallel universe concept; each deletion meaning a new universe where the deleted events didn't happen. Time insertion could work in most universe types.

Another ability is time navigation — the observation of events, normal or paradoxical, when analysing the UTC. This ability can be used in universes where time manipulation doesn't exist — it is basically prophesy for future navigation, or scrying the past for the reverse. In temporally active universes, it is also a useful ability to possess!

Alternatively, the concept of personal time continuums (PTC) could be used. Every living being has a PTC, and these can be analysed by time navigators — simply telling your fortune! Each persons. PTC beings at his birth, but ends at his *natural* death. PTCs are also useful aid in imagining the time insertion process. In the example above, the temple raid, each party members PTC would have an extra hour put in that nobody else had — thus, only in their memories do they seem to have had the extra hour. If they were not in the same position at the beginning and end of this hour, a person observing from the outside would see them disappear and then reappear instantly, "flicking" to the position they occupy at the end of the hour.

But PTCs do not necessarily have to be added to. Imagine the consequences of deleting the portion of a person's PTC where a death (other than that by natural causes, which is right at the end of his PTC and inviolate) occurs, and pushing the cut ends together. Not only death, but injuries, diseases and a multitude of other events could be deleted and avoided...

Of course, anyone could become immortal by continuously inserting time into his PTC, but personally I wouldn't accept this, certainly not for a PC! Death could be caused by the deletion of all but the beginning and end of the PTC — there is no possible way for the victim to retaliate I wouldn't let happen!

I hope I have given some useful ideas here, but I would caution GMs (from my own experience!) that it is wise to finalise their own concepts of time before trying any manipulation — otherwise things can get somewhat tangled!